

Cultural relics from a Dynasty that mysteriously vanished almost 1,000 years ago are on show in Beijing.

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Alalone, shark fin and shrimps are on the menu at Capital Garden Restaurant; a Western style design, but the food is all Chinese.

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His photos of environmental degradation and desertification in Inner Mongolia shocked millions.

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Home's Where the Art Is

By Darlene Lee

As Beijing pulls out the stops to achieve global parity in arenas beyond the economic, the capital's cultural community has not been left out of the boom in investment and opening up.

One visible result of this lavish attention is the increasing community of international artists who call Beijing home. They come from tiny towns and large cities, drawn by the opportunities to create and collaborate. They come from all disciplines: classical music, visual arts, film.

International appeal

Lisa Norton, associate professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, elected to spend her first sabbatical in 15 years in China – a logical extension of her work in the sustain ability of craft and knowledge systems. "I came here to reality-test my ideas, to become a student of Chinese society," Norton says. She is so happy about her experience that she has extended her sabbatical another year as non-paid leave, "I love Beijing. It's so elegant and beautiful with a strong sense of history while being chaotic at the same time."

From the tiny town of Durkstadt, Germany; Elahiu von Erlenbach arrived in Yunnan in 1998 to become China's first foreign conductor. The National Ballet of China found him while on tour and brought him to Beijing to conduct for their orchestra. In 2000, von Erlenbach was appointed conductor of the Beijing Symphony Orchestra, a post he busily combines with that of Cultural Ambassador for Tianjin (where he conducts the Tianjin Music Conservatory Orchestra, the Youth Orchestra and the Nan Kai Symphony Orchestra).

Beatrice Leanza from Milan, Italy graduated with a degree in Chinese contemporary art and headed for China. She landed a job curating with the China Art and Archives Warehouse three weeks after arriving, "I decided to come to China to experience personally the real dynamics revolving around the artistic Chinese community,



Elahiu von Erlenbach
Photo by Zuo Ruixiang

and definitely I knew that it had to be Beijing. Here is the real core of the melting pot that China demonstrates in this 'post-everything' era society. Beijing is everyday compelled to negotiate its political and historical status."

Hailing from Brittany, France, photographer Soizick Porte has lived and worked in Beijing since 1997. She finds the capital "stimulating, challenging and above all, constantly amusing." Manchester-born visual artist Martin Derbyshire moved to Beijing in 2000



Michael Lyon's sculpture studio

Photo Provided by Red Gate Gallery

after five years of travel and research in other provinces. "I came here to collaborate with other art professionals and secure venues for exhibit my work," he notes.

From Scheibbs, Austria (population 5,000), Katharina Schneider-Roos first came to China in 1993 to study for three years. Having married fellow student Olivier Roos from Switzerland, the pair returned to China in 2001 so she could teach at Beijing University. Over the next 18 months, she followed up with the directors she had met while translating at the Vienna Film Festival and collaborated with Solveig Klassen from Germany to make *My Camera Doesn't Lie*, a documentary about the independent film industry in Beijing. Finished in January 2003, the film has since toured international film festivals in Berlin, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea and Vienna.

Residency program

Australian Brian Wallace,

owner and manager of the successful Red Gate Gallery, took a longer view of helping develop the capital's international artistic community by establishing the first private sector artist residency program over ten years ago, formally established in 2000. It now comprises five apartments plus the Australia-China Council's permanent residence in Beijing. Over 50 international artists have been through the program so far, staying from one to six months at a time.

Englishman Michael Lyons

says of his Red Gate residencies, "Beijing is an extremely dynamic and vibrant city with an emerging art environment which gets stronger all the time. It's an exciting place to make art. I did an enormous amount of work as a result of the residency; one piece I made there won an International Prize in China."

The Red Gate residencies offer international artists "an unexpected and exciting opportunity, with the comfort of knowing they'll be looked after. German native Lutz Presser agrees "the residencies are

a fantastic opportunity to spend time in a place which is changing so rapidly from one kind of cultural milieu to another. We might all be lamenting soon enough the homogenizing effect and cultural leveling seemingly introduced by globalization, so China to me at present, reveals things lost or replaced by alluring novel cultural shifts whose impact will ripple on for some time to come."

What makes these talented visionaries call Beijing home? Wallace recalls, "After five years of study and work and organizing artists, the decision had to be made about going home or open an art gallery. That was simple enough as we perceived a growing interest in contemporary Chinese art and there was certainly a huge need to provide exhibition opportunities to young artists. And here we are twelve years later."

For Schneider-Roos "Beijing has a tightly-knit film community, which is very supportive and helpful. With the Beijing Film Academy, it's really the center of China's film industry." She continues, "The increasing relaxation of censorship and official recognition of independent film has opened up a new way for artists to have public access and recognition, so it's a very exciting time in China's film industry since these people will be giving the existing film system a new energy with new perspectives and subjects. It will be fascinating to see how this develops, as a huge turning point in China's film development." Rumours on the grapevine say a 100 year retrospective of Chinese film is in the works, which will go a long way to including both mainstream and independent perspectives in current dialogue, as well as bringing many of these previously-unseen films to domestic audiences.

More at home speaking *putonghua* than English, in which he is fluent, von Erlenbach raves about Beijing, "I love the spontaneity of the people in Beijing, so much feeling. I am just really happy living here, the Chinese are so hospitable. It's my lucky destiny that brings me to China. The most surprising to me was how fast things change, I never know what will happen next week. I see it as a challenge as I must be more flexible and adaptable and also often many unique opportunities come up in this way." He sums up, "No matter where my life takes me, part of my heart will always be in China."

Lifestyle choice

Norton says of the decision to base herself in Beijing, "Although my work will eventually take me to secondary and smaller cities, by being based in Beijing I can experience the most and build networks for my future work in China."

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Seven Chinese Dead in Moscow University Blaze

Seven Chinese students are among the 37 confirmed killed in a deadly fire that swept through a dormitory at a Moscow university early Monday.

Chinese ambassador to Russia Liu Guchang said Wednesday that 43 Chinese students are undergoing medical treatment in 11 Moscow hospitals while three others have already been discharged.

Several Chinese students are still listed as missing, the ambassador said, adding that embassy staff were continuing efforts to determine their whereabouts. He did not rule out a possible increase in the number of Chinese victims.

The fire broke out Monday at about 2:50 am Moscow time in a dormitory of the Patrice Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University, killing at least 37 foreign students from more than 20 countries. Nearly 200 victims remain hospitalized.

Russian authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the fire. Police indicated that the fire appeared to have been caused by misuse or malfunction of an electric appliance, probably an electric heater.

President Hu Jintao urged the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Chinese Embassy in Moscow to maintain contact with the Russian authorities to get the full facts about the situation.

President Hu and Premier Wen Jiabao also urged the ministries and the embassy to look after the injured Chinese students and locate the missing students as quickly as possible. (Sources:Xinhua)



Beatrice Leanza at her home in Beijing
Photo by Carole Lauvergne

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Draft Foreign Trade Law Approved

By Hou Mingxin

Draft amendments to China's foreign trade law and the provisions on customs protection of intellectual property rights were approved in principle by the State Council on Wednesday.

The draft amendments to the foreign trade law are aimed at adjusting to the situation and demands in the wake of China joining the World Trade Organization

two years ago, with the purpose of developing foreign trade, protecting market order and promoting the development of the country's socialist market economy.

After amendments by the State Council, the draft of the foreign trade law will be delivered to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for approval.

The draft revision of the provisions on the customs protection of intellectual property rights will also be issued by the State Council, after it makes certain amendments.

SOE Managers Income Tied to Performance

By Zhang Bo

According to *Shanghai Security Daily*, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council is to launch a system for assessing management performance for enterprises directly under the central government departments next year.

Under the new system, there will reportedly be four key indicators set to evaluate management performance.

These indicators are: total profits, value-added ratio of

assets (ratio of net profits to net assets), value of current assets and the ratio of sales cost to sales income. The principal indicators are total profits and value-added ratio of assets, which will account for 40 and 30 percent respectively of the evaluation.

The manager's income will be directly tied to his management performance, and will consist of basic salary and performance bonus. The basic salary will be assessed according to the scale of the enterprise, average wage level of the industry, regional income gap and general income level of the whole country.

The result of the evaluation will determine the performance bonus, which is generally no more than three times the basic salary.

distribution and projection.

According to the ordinance, foreign capital is also allowed to invest in film technology joint ventures, and overseas investors will be given more access in the area of cinema operation.

Currently, foreign enterprises are only approved to build cinemas as minority shareholders in joint ventures or cooperative businesses. They do not have the right to run and manage cinemas.

State-owned cinemas are at present in dire need of funds to upgrade equipment and compete with new joint-venture cinema complexes.

Film Industry Opens to Foreign and Private Capital

By Hou Mingxin

From December 1, China will allow foreign and private investors to buy minority shares in film production companies, according to sources from the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television.

The policy change comes under the framework of a recent ordinance released by the administration on qualifications for film production,

Home's Where the Art Is

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Norton's work bridging the disciplines of art, architectural design and systems focuses on the juncture between historic and contemporary and as such, part of her mission is "to take microsystems which work well in China and share them with the rest of the world."

Porte notes that Beijing offers "the most direct meeting of old and new, the official and the underground. The juxtaposition of dissimilarities creates a tension and interaction that is unique to Beijing. For me, that means a lot more emotions to pour into my art."

Beijing audiences benefit from being at the forefront of the development of domestic audiences. Von Erlenbach enthuses about the growing appreciation for classical music in the capital noting, "Though the classical music domestic market is limited, it is growing rapidly – due partially to the afford ability of classical music CDs. When concerts are free, we always have a full house, which means that there is much interest in classical music. This will only continue as audiences have more access to high-quality classical music performances."

Norton concurs, "Sweeping cultural differences no longer exist as artists have access to the same information, so the dialogue is similar. The gap occurs because domestic art audiences are just starting to be nurtured." Porte says of her recent show titled *The Anatomy of Restlessness*, "I was entranced by the reaction of the Chinese to my photographs; they were not only engaged visually and in the subject matter but were also full of questions about the how's and why's."

Visual artist Martin Derbyshire adds, "The most refreshing thing about Beijing is that we have a context in which to be surprised by discovering how similar we are: a process which undermines all the stereotypical definitions through which superficial and exploitative relationships are maintained and which instead orients us towards more

authentic collaborations based on unity and mutual respect."

Global culture

As a microcosm of the economic sphere, these Beijingers-by-choice are optimistic about the capital's increasing role in the global cultural community. "The Chinese have consistently been participating in and winning prizes at international film festivals for over 20 years now," notes Schneider-Roos. "It's a huge turning point in the development of film in China and that's what makes it so fascinating," she adds.

Porte observes "It's not so much that Beijing needs to become international ... Artists from every province are coming to Beijing for the multi-cultural possibility and opportunity of the city. It's more a question of what it will take for Beijing to be the ultimate destination ... rather than a way station for going abroad."

From her perspective as professor, artist and critic; Norton feels that "the artwork here is the best kept secret in the art world. It's not fully understood externally in its own context and I hope to help bridge that gap when I get home."

Curator Leanza is "most confident that China will attract a lot of people in the future. Chinese artists have intense mental ties bounding their approach to tradition and to a society which is permeated by a very unique urban ethos. It's a thrilling experience to be in China, it's a world in itself."

"Like other places in Asia, it will take time for the local establishment to accept that foreigners can play a constructive part in the arts establishment, not just on the fringe," observes Red Gate's Wallace. "Beijing has great resources but needs to seek input at all levels of the art world – galleries, museums, teaching, exchange programs, curatorial studies programs, gallery associations, advisory bodies, funding bodies, think tanks, art fairs, biennales, publishing, touring exhibitions and so on. It is happening slowly but could benefit from a sustained booster."

Concern over US TV Import Ruling

China is seriously concerned about a US ruling that has slapped dumping duties on color television imports from China, a Ministry of Commerce official said Tuesday.

The US Department of Commerce Monday imposed tariffs ranging from 27.9 percent to 78.4 percent on color television sets imported from China.

The official, from the ministry's Import and Export Fair Trade Bureau, pointed out that most color television sets exported by China to the US contain parts that China imports from Japan, the US and other countries and regions.

"Under such circumstances, it is very hard to understand the US move to impose such high dumping tariffs on Chinese enterprises, unless the United States regards these nations and regions as having dumped color television parts on China," said the official.

He said in China the production and sale of color televisions depend on the market, and the related companies are responsible for their own business and compete with each other.

"And it is utterly unjustifiable that the United States still uses India as a third surrogate country to calculate the prices of Chinese products," he added.

The imposition of dumping tariffs in this case also violates section 15 of the protocol China signed when it entered the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the WTO's basic principles, according to the official.

The US has accused China of dumping on seven occasions so far this year, involving a total of US \$1.6 billion. This has greatly disturbed the normal trade order between China and the United States, he said. (Xinhua)



Photo by Photocom

Anger at US Imposition of Fabric Import Quotas

Vice Minister of Commerce Ma Xiuhong summoned US Ambassador Clark Randt for an emergency meeting last Thursday, expressing deep regret and firm opposition to the US decision to impose import quotas on Chinese fabric products.

The US announced Monday a request for negotiations on imports from China of knitted fabrics, bras, dressing gowns and robes, as safeguard measures, which could trigger the imposition of import quotas.

The decision will negatively impact China-US trade and harm the interests of the US itself, Ma said, adding that US exports of raw fabric materials, finished products and textile machinery to China had surged in recent years.

China hopes the US fully will recognize the negative impact on normal trade between the two countries caused by abusing safeguard measures on fabric products and urges the US to withdraw its wrong decision, Ma said.

Since September last year, the Ministry of Commerce had pointed out many times that the US textile industry had failed to prove in its application for restrictions that the reduction of US textile products was the result of imports from China, she said.

The decision did not conform to the US Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements's procedure on special safeguards against Chinese textile products and garments, and to the contents of the working group report on China's accession to the WTO, Ma said.

"The US administration's decision to request negotiations in disregard of the facts runs counter to WTO principles on free trade, transparency and non-discrimination," Ma said.

"As a WTO member, China reserves the right to appeal to the relevant organizations of the WTO to safeguard the interests of Chinese industries," she added. (Xinhua)

No Plans to Dump US Treasury Bonds

By Ji Runju

China will not dump US treasury bonds in retaliation for the new restrictions on importing Chinese fabrics, *China Business* reported Monday.

"The nature of our agency is to manage the national forex assets well, to put it simply, we're looking at profits, and as long as we don't get instructions from the central bank, we won't sell US treasury bonds in a bid to retaliate," an official with State Administration of Foreign Exchange, who declined to give his name, told the paper.

"Though the exchange rate of the US dollar has been dropping, we have our measures in place to reduce as much as possible any possible loss," the official was quoted as saying.

China's foreign exchange reserves are the second-largest in the world after Japan's, hitting \$383.9 billion by late September, and many international investors are afraid that China will sell off US treasury bonds in retaliation the recent US anti-dumping move. As a consequence, the exchange rate of the US dollar against every principal currency has fallen.

Anti-dumping Tariff Collected on Chemical

By Hou Mingxin

The Ministry of Commerce last Saturday began levying an anti-dumping tax on a chemical product imported from the United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan.

Starting from November 22, imports from these countries of the chemical, toluene diisocyanate, will attract tariffs ranging from 3 to 49 percent for a five-year period, according to a bulletin issued by the ministry.

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The former Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC) started an anti-dumping investigation into this product in May 2002, at the request of Chinese producers.

The Ministry of Commerce, which succeeded MOFTEC, announced an initial decision in June this year. Last Saturday's announcement was the final verdict on this case.

Public Security Review

Break-ins and auto thefts again accounted for the majority of crimes investigated by Beijing police last week.

The theft cases mostly occurred in Chaoyang, Haidian and Fengtai districts at night and in the early mornings.

Residential complexes, office buildings and rented houses on the outskirts were the most common sites for break-ins to occur.

The number of robberies committed by motorcyclists is increasing as a percentage of reported crime, the majority of which have occurred at heavily populated locations in eastern Chaoyang, especially at crossroads under overpasses, entrances to residential complexes and shopping-malls.

In most cases, the robberies were committed by two men riding a motorcycle and the targets, middle-aged women.

Police have urged citizens to be wary using mobile phones at intersections and in crowded places and to take care of valuables when walking in the street.

(Information from Beijing Public Security Bureau)

Zhongguancun Think Tank Established

By Shan Jinliang

Since November 20, a team of 32 entrepreneurs have been working in a think tank participating in decision-making on the development of the Zhongguancun Science Park

The Zhongguancun Entrepreneurs Consulting Committee, under the State Council, consists of 25 permanent commissioners and seven invited commissioners, all high-tech entrepreneurs or involved in venture capital business. Liu Chuanzhi, president of Lenovo Holding Corporation is director of the committee, which also includes Shu Qi, vice president of HP China and Xu Tao, head of Viatch China region.

Zhongguancun Science Park Administrative Committee commissioner Zhao Mulan told Xinhua last week that foreign-invested companies are important members of the science park, and only when their ideas should be fully respected. Around 12 percent of the almost 10,000 Zhongguancun companies are foreign-funded, Zhao added.

Dai Wei, deputy director of the administrative committee told press last Thursday that according to the regulations of Zhongguancun, suggestions from the consulting committee must be considered before the administrative committee makes any major decisions. These entrepreneurs are also entitled to present their ideas and suggestions to state-level ministries and departments and the Beijing municipal government.

Wider Access for OS Travel Agencies

By Lei Li

The National Tourism Administration has announced China will allow more foreign travel firms to establish agencies here, in order to meet WTO commitments, Xinhua reported last Friday.

China's tourism industry had attracted US \$50 billion in foreign investment by the end of 2002, about 11 percent of the total foreign investment of \$450 billion, the report said.

Currently, Shangri-la, Sheraton, Hilton and other international hotel groups have entered the Chinese market and 10 joint venture travel agencies have been established in China.

Foreign investors will also be allowed to take controlling stakes in joint ventures. Foreign firms will be allowed to operate in five major cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Xi'an.

In July, the administration approved the establishment in Beijing of Jalpak International, the first foreign-financed travel agency in China.

Government Plan to Push Digital TV Channels in Question

By Zhao Hongyi

The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), the watchdog of China's electronic media and culture industry, has announced plans to promote the development of domestic digital pay-TV channels. However, the ambitious plan has met with as much doubt and hesitation as cheer.

SARFT spokesman Zhu Hong told the Beijing-based entertainment newspaper *Beijing StarDaily* on Monday that his administration was set to grant licenses to 80 digital television channels and 45 digital radio channels by the end of 2005 and would phase out all analog programs by 2015. "We hope to have more than 150 pay-TV channels by then," he added.

Analog TV programming is expected to meet its end by 2006 in the US, 2010 in Europe and 2011 in Japan.

According to Zhu, one third of the 150 domestic channels would be operated under the system of China Central Television (CCTV) and the rest would be managed by provincial or lower-level stations.

The government's plan would bring the total number of programming channels in China up to around 500, but could conflict with the many separate cable and satellite TV stations and networks already operating in the country. SARFT has so far licensed 27 digital pay-TV channels and

seven radio programs, most of which have started broadcasting since September 1 and are based in big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

A survey conducted by CVSC-Sofres Media, a joint venture TV audience measuring firm set up by China International Television Corporation and Taylor Nelson Sofres, one of the world's leading market research groups, showed the number of subscribers in these new services has reached 50,000.

The Hong Kong-based Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia forecasts that by 2010, pay-TV program subscribers in the mainland will reach 128 million. According to a SARFT report, "If one subscriber pays 1,000 yuan per year, that means revenues of 100 billion yuan. Moreover, there will be massive demand for set top boxes needed to upgrade the more than 400 million analog TV sets in this country, as well as huge demand for new digital TV sets."

Hao Shiheng, a mass communications researcher at the Beijing Broadcasting Institute, said, "Market potential is even greater if we consider the demand brought by the upgrading of digital TV programs, establishment of broadband networks and related broadcasting equipment production."

However, these same seg-

ments are exactly where other experts see significant dangers.

While China has laid a huge amount of TV cable in the past decade, the new pay-TV programs would require greater bandwidth, necessitating new rounds of network construction. In addition, cable TV networks are owned and operated by different entities in different locations, making a united pay-TV network difficult to set up.

SARFT has announced plans to establish a company to coordinate nationwide network construction and connection by the end of this year.

Program production poses another significant second problem. Over 70 percent of China's TV stations are worried that the dearth high-quality programming would be a major obstacle in promoting digital pay-TV channels, according to the survey by CVSC-Sofres Media.

"At present, we have not yet met market demand for analog TV programs, not to mention higher-quality digital programs," said Wang Lanzhu, general manager of CVSC-Sofres Media.

Another nagging concern is pricing. Normal charges in coastal cities run 30 to 50 yuan per month, according to the survey. Such prices would have to drop dramatically to draw viewers from China's vast hinterland.



Photo by Photocom

Will EVD Render DVD Obsolete?

By James Liu

China has moved forward from being the world's biggest maker of DVD players to actually creating a next-generation replacement technology, the EVD, or enhanced versatile disk. The introduction of the EVD could be the first step in the formation of a new national industry standard.

Beijing E-world Technology Co. Ltd., a government-backed consortium of enterprises and research organizations, unveiled the first line of super-high definition EVD players at a press conference in the capital on November 18. The resolution of EVD is up to five times that of DVD, and the players are expected to sell for around 1,900 yuan, 800 yuan higher than many low-range DVD players.

The Ministry of Information Industry will set up a group this month to deliberate on whether to adopt EVD as the new national industry standard, the ministry's spokesman said.

The creation of the new technology is intended to allow domestic home electronics makers to avoid paying massive royalties to the owners of the patents for DVD technology, including Philips and some Japanese electronics giants. More than 100 domestic DVD makers produced about 30 million players last year and exported 20 million machines, accounting for nearly 70 percent of all the players on the global market. At present, domestic DVD makers pay a total of 2.7 billion yuan a year in licensing fees to foreign patent owners.

"It's not a question of whether we will go the way of EVD. It is a question of whether it will happen fast or slow," Hao Jie, president of E-world Technology, said at the conference for the unveiling of the new technology. According to Hao, 1.8 million EVD players

will be manufactured in 2004.

However, EVD will not be able to knock DVD from its leading position overnight. "Even if China were to adopt EVD, it seems unlikely that it would be widely adopted in the rest of the world," Helen Davis Jayalath told Reuters at the event. Jayalath is a senior analyst with the London-based Screen Digest, a market research journal on audio visual media. Her doubts were echoed by some Chinese counterparts, as a researcher from the domestic digital disk technology industry expressed concerns over the willingness of movie giants like Warner Brothers, Dreamworks and Fox to adopt this standard in their entertainment products.

Only five domestic DVD makers have signed up to make EVDs. SVA Electronics, one of China's biggest DVD makers with an annual output of about five million players, has started mass production, a company spokesman announced at the November 18 conference.

E-world Company has applied for 25 patents for EVD-related technologies, seven of which have been granted. The company has nearly 40 more patent applications in the pipeline. In addition, a group of major Chinese home appliances manufacturers have submitted applications for making EVD an international technical standard to the International Electro Technical Commission and the International Organization for Standardization.

In 1999, the Chinese government contributed 10 million yuan, or one quarter of the total research and development costs, to begin research of EVD after nine major foreign electronics makers, including Sony and Toshiba, pressured Chinese DVD makers to pay \$9 in retroactive royalties for each player exported.

Private Capital Adds Life to Old Auction House

By James Liu

On December 14, century-old local auction house Rongbaozhai will hold its first large-scale calligraphy and painting auction since the firm sold 30 percent of its shares to Wang Yishan, general manager of the Nanjing-based Wangchao Auction Company, in July.

That sale turned the formerly state-owned action house into China's first joint venture auction firm.

Wang Yishan, now vice chairman of the board of directors and deputy general manager of Rongbaozhai, said at the first preview

for the auction held November 14 that his company had prepared more than 600 calligraphy and painting works, including pieces by modern masters Xu Beihong and Qi Baishi. The company will hold a second preview in the Asia Hotel from December 11 to 13.

A Rongbaozhai employee told a reporter from *Beijing StarDaily* that Wang's arrival had enhanced the company's competitiveness. A small auction held in August earned a record income of 188 million yuan from the sale of 272 pieces, accounting for 77 percent of all the items on the

auction block.

Wang said he started co-operating with Rongbaozhai nearly a decade ago and was drawn to Beijing because of the huge transaction volume in the local auction market, which he said accounts for two-thirds of premium art sales nationwide.

Other highlights of the auction are a painting of a black dragon by an unknown Song Dynasty artists and the landscape painting *Red Mountain* by Lu Yanshao, based on a poem by Chairman Mao. Wang said he expected the latter painting to fetch at least 2 million yuan.

Yahoo Acquires 3721 to Improve Performance

By Zhao Hongyi

Yahoo.com (Hong Kong) announced the acquisition of Hong Kong-based 3721 Network Software, the technical arm of the Beijing-based top Chinese online searching portal 3721, for a price of \$120 million on November 22. Many industry analysts believe the purchase represents a new push by Yahoo to stimulate its performance in the mainland market.

Yahoo has been quite aggressive in the search engine market, acquiring the US-based firms Overture and Inktomi in the past two years.

The American company entered China five years ago and set up a Chinese web por-

tal site, but has since developed slowly in the domestic market. Its portal business only made 13.6 million yuan in the first seven months in China, mainly from online advertising. In comparison, China's biggest portal, Sina.com, made 168.5 million yuan, according to Shanghai iResearch Co., an Internet industry research firm.

However, even Beijing 3721 leaders admit that its core business is not real name address searching. "What Yahoo covets is our services for providing and registering real name Chinese web addresses," said a 3721 executive who requested anonymity.

3721 has long striven to

hold an initial public offering in the US or Hong Kong, but been disappointed as a result of some nagging problems. The company is facing a number of pending intellectual property rights lawsuits related to real name searching, including charges filed by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), a semi-official organization in charge of the domestic domain name system, and Baidu.com, a rival Chinese search engine.

Yahoo will strive to settle these legal problems and restructure 3721 in the near future, according to a source from Yahoo (Hong Kong) as quoted in the *Economic Observer* on November 22.

Seven Overseas Banks Granted Inter-bank Lending Rights

By Zhao Hongyi

Seven overseas banks have been granted the rights to conduct inter-bank lending and borrowing business in the mainland market, according to information from the People's Bank of China.

The banks are the Guangzhou branch of Mitsui Sumitomo Bank, Shenzhen branch of the Taiwan-based United Overseas Bank Group, Shekou branch of the Hong Kong-based Nanyang Commercial Bank, Qingdao branch of Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), Shanghai branch of May Bank from Malaysia and Dalian branch of the Bank of East Asia.

The maximum amount of a single transaction has been set at 150 million yuan, except for Mitsui Sumitomo, which has a top transaction limit of 300 million yuan. The maximum terms of the loans have been set at four months.

Beijing-Hyundai Firming Position in Domestic Market

By Zhao Hongyi

Beijing-Hyundai, the joint venture of South Korea's Hyundai Motors and Beijing Auto Investment Co., plans to build its second plant next year, according to an announcement made by company Chairman Xu Heyi on November 23 at an auto industry seminar in Beijing.

Since its first car rolled off the assembly lines at the end of last year, Beijing-Hyundai has produced 45,000 Hyundai Sonata sedans, and the joint venture hopes to begin manufacturing Elantra cars before the new year. The company's ambitious plans call for annual production of the two models to reach 300,000 units by 2005.

The new plant will produce Hyundai XG sedans and Coupe sports cars. When the second facility is completed by 2007, Beijing-Hyundai's total annual production capacity should exceed 600,000 cars.

Foreign Trade Robust Says Ministry of Commerce

By Zhao Hongyi

Despite difficulties caused by the war in Iraq, the sluggish world economy and SARS, China's external trade reached \$682.33 billion in the first ten months of this year, according to a report issued on November 23 by the Ministry of Commerce.

The ministry is optimistic that external trade for the whole year will reach \$800 billion. However, it has also warned that newly-lowered export tax rebates could hamper exports, worldwide trade protectionism against China-made products is increasing, and China has to open its markets more aggressively after its WTO accession. "These conditions are particularly threatening to the agriculture industry," the ministry stressed in its report.

Auchan Opens Local Megamarket

By Zhao Hongyi

French supermarket giant Auchan Group opened its first outlet in the west of Beijing on November 23. The 120,000-square-meter store is Auchan's largest in China.

The huge supermarket stocks around 250,000 kinds of commodities, 99 percent of which are locally purchased and nearly one third of which are raw, fresh foods. The store's massive parking lot can accommodate over 1,300 cars.

Auchan has announced that it plans to open three to five stores in Beijing over the next five years.

More Graduates to Flood Job Market

By Zhao Hongyi

A total of 2.8 million graduates from universities and institutes nationwide will enter the domestic job market in 2004, Hou Jianliang, vice minister of personnel, said at a press conference in Beijing on Sunday.

"That is 680,000 more than this year," the vice minister added. According to Hou, the ministry is trying to encourage graduates to find jobs in China's less developed western areas and in the field of community services.

Georgia Plans Election After “Rose Revolution”

Tbilisi, Georgia, November 25 (AFP) - Georgia said new presidential elections would be held on January 4 following the ouster of Eduard Shevardnadze, a move the interim leadership said would put the former Soviet republic firmly on the path to democracy.

Opposition leader Mikhail Saakashvili, who led weeks of street protests that forced Shevardnadze to resign in Georgia's “rose revolution,” emerged as a top contender in the presidential poll. His party said on Monday that he would be running.

Saakashvili, a US-educated 35-year-old lawyer, said Tuesday that the two main opposition parties -- the Saakashvili-National Movement and the smaller Burjanadze-Democrats bloc -- would unite behind a single candidate for the presidency.

Mrs. Nino Burjanadze, who has not revealed whether or not she would also run, promised lawmakers the vote would take place in a calm and

democratic manner following weeks of political turmoil.

“We are going to hold democratic and fair elections within the next few weeks. I'm going to do everything to maintain stability and peace in the country,” she told lawmakers.

Burjanadze, a former parliament speaker, took over as head of state after Shevardnadze resigned on Sunday, ending 11 years at the helm of the Caucasus republic, which lies on a transit route for oil from the Caspian Sea to the West.

The 39-year-old ally of Saakashvili also said Tuesday that Tbilisi would be seeking financial aid to pull the country back from the brink of economic collapse.

“We intend to ask for the help of the international community,” Burjanadze said during a televised meeting at the presidency.

Burjanadze's plea for financial help came after the United States, a key

ally of Georgia, said it was prepared to help ease the political transition in the former Soviet republic, leaving the door open to financial assistance.

Georgia, still struggling after the collapse of the Soviet Union over a decade ago, has a foreign debt of US\$1.8 billion (1.5 billion euros). Washington is the major donor to Georgia, providing US\$1.3 billion over the last 10 years.

The United States also announced it was sending an interagency team to Georgia next week to help in the transition of power.

The team “will discuss with the interim government how we can help them prepare for upcoming elections and work on other issues of critical importance to Georgia,” said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher.

Analysts' Take:

Political interests and poverty are

the two major factors behind the fall of Eduard Shevardnadze.

Georgia's location is important from both a geopolitical and a military point of view. The oil and natural gas pipelines from the Middle East to Europe cross the tiny country. Therefore, US intervention is inevitable.

The country is poor and corruption is serious. This raised the complaints and anger of the population. Shevardnadze has not built a strong and forceful central government in his ten years as president. Some high-ranking soldiers came out in support of the opposition before he resigned.

— **Shen Shiliang**, researcher, Development Research Center of the State Council

Shevardnadze had been trying to keep a balance between the US and Russia. The two powers have their own military bases in the tiny land.

This time, the pro-West group seized power. But they can't go too far into western arms, as Russia has its cards to play, such as the military base and the fact that one million Georgians work and live in Russia.

Internally, the opposition alliance is fragile. It is not yet clear who will come out on top.

— **Zhen Yu**, researcher, Institute of Russia and Eurasia Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

McDonald's Rapped for ‘Simple Fries’ Ads

London, November 26 (Reuters) - Fast food corporation McDonald's has been rapped by British advertising watchdogs for a campaign that trumpeted the brilliant simplicity of their recipe for fries -- the humble potato and nothing else.

Adverts showed a potato in a fries box alongside the text: “The story of our fries (end of story).”

But the public and campaigners objected, saying that often the chips were part-fried in one country, sometimes in beef tallow; flown halfway round the world; soaked in dextrose; often contaminated with gluten and finally drenched in excessive levels of salt.



Boeing's new headquarters in Detroit Reuters Photo

Boeing Fires CFO in Hiring Scandal

Chicago, November 24 (Reuters) - Boeing, the No. 2 US military contractor, said chief financial officer Michael Sears was dismissed for violating company policies by communicating with Darleen Druyun about future employment even though she had not disqualified herself from acting in an official government capacity on matters involving Boeing.

The company also fired Druyun, who was on the job less than a year.

Investors said the actions were welcome in an era of decreasing tolerance for corporate misdeeds.

(Kathy Fieweger)

AOL Sues Ex-Executive

New York, November 25 (AP) - America Online is suing its former chief of human resources, Gregory Horton, claiming that he bilked the company of \$100,000 in a scheme to divert money to a sham company.

AOL fired Horton in August after reviewing the suspect payment. In October, AOL fired another executive in its human resources division who had worked for Horton, Ruben Moreno. AOL also named Moreno in the lawsuit, claiming that he participated in the embezzlement scheme.

(Seth Sutell)

Toyota's Prius Named ‘Car Of The Year’

Detroit, November 26 (wsj.com) - Toyota Motor Corp.'s Prius gasoline-electric hybrid car has been named Motor Trend magazine's “Car of the Year,” an image booster for the popular auto and a fresh sign that hybrids are gaining greater traction in the US market.

Prius outmaneuvered General Motors' revived Pontiac GTO muscle car, DaimlerChrysler's German-American inspired Crossfire, and other sexy speedsters from Bayerische Motoren Werke AG and Cadillac. Once considered somewhat doozy in the automotive crowd, the redesigned Prius is now selling briskly.

(Sholnn Freeman)



Toyota's Prius File Photo

Tokyo Joins Asian Highway

Bangkok, November 21 (Asahi Shimbun)-Tokyo was set up as the starting point of Asian Highway earlier this week.

The route will run from Tokyo through the Korean Peninsula via Pyongyang, down through China to Vietnam, then west all the way to Istanbul.

The UN launched the Asian Highway project in 1959, but progress stalled in the late 1960s due to wars and international tensions.

The project revived in the late 1980s with the end of the Cold War. Last year, 55 routes in 31 participating nations were decided.

Tokyo Wants East Asian Community

Jakarta, Indonesia, November 24 (Asahi Shimbun) - Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's proposal to create an East Asian community will be incorporated in a Tokyo declaration to be adopted at the Japan-ASEAN summit in the capital from December 11 to 12, according to diplomatic sources.

With the aim of fostering dynamic and lasting cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Tokyo declaration will call for closer and more wide-ranging ties in politics, security and the economy as well as development, culture and society.

The gist of the declaration was agreed on at a vice ministerial meeting in Tokyo on November 17 and 18.

As part of social and cultural exchanges, Tokyo will offer scholarships over the next five years to 10,000 students from ASEAN member countries to enable them to visit Japan, according to the declaration's draft outline.

Officials at the meeting agreed to incorporate the idea of creating an East Asian community in 25 years, following in the footsteps of Europe.

Along the same lines, Japan and ASEAN leaders agreed at an October summit in Bali, Indonesia, to establish a Comprehensive Economic Partnership by 2012 with an eye to creating a free trade area. Talks to liberalize investments and trade in goods and services will begin in 2004.

Japan will also give a greater hand to development of the Mekong delta involving Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, as well as to the East ASEAN Growth Area, which involves the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and others. Japan will also join efforts to reduce economic disparities within the ASEAN region.

(Masaaki Sanada)

ASEAN has been inviting Japan to join the ASEAN Friendship Agreement for years. But Japan declined to avoid affecting its relations with the US. This time, Koizumi made his decision, but wants to develop the relationship into an even greater “East Asian community”.

Japan's change in attitude towards ASEAN indicates it has started the contest for leadership against China in East Asia.

In economic and trade cooperation, China has built up closer ties with the ASEAN members in the last five years. Japan, with stronger economic and technological strength, cannot lose the race.

— **Zhang Huanli**, reporter, Xinhua News Agency, Tokyo

Analyst's Take:

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Here Comes Christmas!

The first open Christmas market in Germany opened at the famous Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin on November 27. The market offers Christmas decorations, garments, craft wares, and Christmas snacks.

Xinhua Photo

Shoppers Hit Stores Earlier for Holidays

New York, November 26 (AP) - For those who can't wait, Thanksgiving Day is becoming more of an option to begin holiday gift buying - in between carving a turkey and diving into pumpkin pie.

While major toy retailers traditionally close their doors on Thursday, consumers can pick up a Barbie or two at grocers Albertson's, which has partnered with Toys “R” Us, and Safeway, which has teamed with K-B Toys, as well as other supermarket chains that have recently aligned with major toy sellers.

For the first time, Sears, Roebuck and Co. - which along with most department stores goes dark on Thanksgiving - is giving online customers early access to Friday's deals, allowing them

to order on the Internet on Thursday and then pick up the merchandise in the stores over the weekend.

Convenience store chain 7-Eleven, has increasingly added more - and more upscale - holiday gifts to its stores, most of which are open 24 hours a day. This year, consumers can find digital cameras, hot toys like Mighty Beanz, DVDs and “Cat in the Hat” figurines.

Kmart will offer 70 percent off both jewelry and shoes.

“It is becoming more accepted to shop on Thanksgiving, and stores are fulfilling the need,” said C. Britt Beemer, chairman of America's Research Group, in Charleston, S.C.

An increasing number of independent retailers in electronics and apparel have made Thanksgiving

Day their season opener, and have had successes, Beemer said.

And a recent survey by ARG of 1,000 women found that about 19 percent were interested in shopping on the holiday, up from about 11 percent five years ago, Beemer said. Men still show little interest, with less than 3 percent saying they were keen on buying gifts on Thanksgiving.

The nation's retailers are more optimistic about holiday sales this year than in the past few years amid signs of an improving economy and rebounding consumer confidence. But consumers are still cautious, and stores fear customers will again postpone their shopping while they wait for prices to drop.

(Anne D'Innocenzio)

UN: Most Spam Comes From US

New York, November 24 (dmnews.com) - A UN Conference on Trade and Development reported that 58.4 percent of spam in March 2003 came from the US, which also suffers the most spam. The No. 2 source for spam was China, accounting for 5.6 percent.

UNCTAD cites MessageLabs statistics that spam worldwide could overtake legitimate e-mail by the end of the year, which already has

occurred in the US. The report puts the global spam price tag at \$20.5 billion, covering IT costs, lost productivity and maintenance of help desks.

UNCTAD concluded that spam, often the vehicle for IT viruses, represents a threat to public confidence in the Internet, particularly in developing countries. A recent Pew Internet study found that fewer US Internet users trusted e-mail because of spam.

The report urged governments to cooperate in fighting spam. Cooperation has been limited by different approaches to the problem. In the European Union, a directive recently went into force that will outlaw unsolicited commercial e-mail, while the US has yet to adopt federal anti-spam legislation. The Senate passed the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003, which does not ban unsolicited commercial e-mail.

Village Suffering from Over-Fluoridation

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Recent media reports have drawn attention to the plight of the residents of a remote village on the outskirts of the capital, but far more needs to be done.

Hujiaying village, home to just 240 households, lies in the northwest of Yanqing County. People in the area have long suffered a negative reputation for their yellow teeth, the result of a condition widespread in the village called dental fluorosis, which is caused by long-term intake of water with excessive fluoride content.

Residents of Hujiaying are more susceptible to dental problems and diseases than most people. Hu Jinrong, only 28, has already lost most of her teeth and must choke down mostly mushy foods. What worries her more is that little yellow spots have begun appearing on the teeth of her five-year-old daughter.

Their dental difficulties have created a collective feeling of inferiority among the villagers, as they tend to keep their mouths shut in front of strangers. The water has also driven many away – “95 percent of our young people have all gone away to look for jobs,” said Hu Chuntun, secretary of the village committee.



Natives of Hujiaying are shy to smile in front of strangers on account of their yellow teeth.

Photo by Gloom

A more dangerous problem caused by the over-fluoridated water is a disease called skeletal fluorosis that makes bones very brittle. Zhang Yuying, 65, has to take painkillers to make it through ev-

ery day following an accident in which her leg was badly broken four years ago. Nearly two thirds of the older residents of the village have suffered such injuries, which are becoming more common

among younger people as well.

Six wells have been dug in the village in hopes of striking more potable water, but with no success. The high fluoride content of the local water is the result of natural phenomenon.

Their struggles have been reported by the local media for over one week, leading authorities and experts to seek a solution. Following a careful survey of the village's geography, senior geological engineers Cai Qiaosheng and Feng Bingxing from the Beijing Institute of Geosciences Engineering determined that it was impossible to find potable water in a two to three square kilometer area around the village. That means that water will have to be channeled in from a neighboring area. The cost of such a project has been estimated at around 600,000 yuan.

The China Youth Development Foundation has set up a donation campaign to aid the people of Hujiaying in getting healthier water. Donations can be sent to their office at No. 68, Xizhimen Nanxiaojie, Beijing Youth Palace Room 225, Xicheng, and more information is available by calling 6611 0001 or at the website www.bjydf.cn.

Capital to Host ATP Tournament Next Year

By Chen Ying

Former US Open champion Marat Safin and Asia's highest-ranked player Paradorn Srichaphan finished a four-day trip in Beijing yesterday. They were in town to promote the China Open 2004, a new event on the men's Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) tour and its first major tournament in Beijing.

The event will be held September 13 to 26, 2004 and include women's, senior and junior invitational tournaments in addition to the men's ATP competition.

Safin, Srichaphan and former world No. 1 Carlos Moya have confirmed they would play in the tournament according to the China Open Organizing Committee. At a press conference held at the Beijing International Club Hotel on Tuesday, committee secretary general Zhang Xiaoning said over 70 top international professionals would participate in the tournament to compete for the estimated \$500,000 in prize money.

The committee's assignment is to develop the China Open into a premier international tennis event, and towards that aim the group plans to reconstruct the Beijing Guangcai Sports Center in six months, including the addition of a new 10,000-seat center court.



Tennis stars Marat Safin and Paradorn Srichaphan visited the Dongyuan Theatre Wednesday evening as part of their Beijing visit.

Photo by Wei Tong

Nigerian Footballers Turned Back

By Hans Leu

At 1 pm yesterday, 19 Nigerian men boarded a plane in Beijing to return to their country, probably happy to be returning home but disappointed to have their visions of professional play dashed.

They were part of a group of over 20 Nigerian football players who came to China earlier this month hoping to find places in the domestic football league. However, their poor performance failed to impress their target Chinese team in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, and the lack of interest resulted in their being stuck in that city with little to live on and no means of returning home.

The footballers came back to Beijing on Saturday after being rounded up and assisted by the Xi'an police. The money for their flight home was provided by the Nigerian Embassy.

Ye Baozeng, spokesman for the Shaanxi Guoli Football Club, said that the Nigerian players were from the champion team of their country's league and they came to China to seek posts with the Guoli team, which is in last place in the rankings of the top domestic league this year.

In order to test the prospective players' skills, the Chinese club organized a match against the Nigerians in Xi'an on November 12. However, the Guoli players stopped the game after just one half because their opponents' skill levels were simply too low.

The Nigerian players were not able to immediately return to their country, a fact that went unknown until some of them were found aimlessly wandering the streets of Xi'an on November

18. By that point, their visas had expired and they had little or no money to pay for accommodation or food. The Nigerian men ended up scattered all over the city, unaware of each other's whereabouts.

Local police spent a whole day tracking them all down and then provided the tired, hungry men with free food and places to sleep.

One of the Nigerians told the police that they had spent all their money and the leader of the team had flown back to their country to seek a solution to their predicament. They also told the police that a travel agency from Beijing had organized their trip to China, but the contract with that agent was severed due to a payment dispute.

The Xi'an Entry-Exit Bureau extended the players' visas, and the local police gave them spending money and tickets to Beijing so that they could then fly back home.

The Nigerian football players' bitter experiences in China are somewhat representative of those of many third-class players who hope to enter the Chinese football league.

"They underestimate the level of play in the Chinese football league," said Ye Baozeng. "In the early days of the league, many third class players were imported and well paid, but they contributed nothing to the development of the Chinese game. Believing that the domestic league would sign up most players and make them rich, players from developing countries are eager to come here, but now that the league has developed, there are no chances that incompetent players will get contracts."

Class Addresses Homosexuality

By Su Wei

The class Health and Social Science as Related to Homosexuality offered since mid-October at the School of Public Health of Fudan University in Shanghai has had only one enrolled student, Zhou Leiming, a graduate student in the field of epidemiology. However, the controversial course, the first of its kind in a domestic university, has attracted far wider interest and attention, drawing scores of students and academics to the weekly two-hour lectures on aspects of homosexuality.

Less than 10 percent of universities in China offer classes on sexual education, according to the results of a four-year survey released at the national conference on Health Education for University Students held earlier this month.

The class began on October 22 and will include a total of nine lectures. Associate professor Gao Yanning, the organizer of the course, told *Beijing Today*, "I have long worked in the field of AIDS research and I thought homosexuality was an issue worth discussing and studying as related to the prevention and control of AIDS."

He continued, "People invited to speak are either sociologists and scholars in the field, including homosexual individuals, who may be able to influence society at large. I do not want to say if it is a success or not, I have simply done my best. I want medical students to see the need to look at the issue of preventing and controlling AIDS not only from a medical viewpoint but also from a perspective of social science."

"There is still a lot of misunder-

standing and prejudice against homosexuals in China. We are not promoting homosexuality, we just want to educate," said Chung To, chairman of the Hong Kong-based charitable organization the Chi Heng Foundation, which is helping to fund the course. "We hope this course will set an example for other universities."

Guest lecturer Zhang Beichuang, a professor at the Medical School of Tsingdao University, said he agreed to participate in the course in hopes of creating a better environment for the estimated over 30 million homosexual people in this country. "Most people refuse to understand that sexual preference is a simple issue about the freedom of love," he said.

Through the lectures, Zhang added, he has seen that young people are willing to communicate and have contact with homosexuals. At the same time, he lamented the backwardness of general sex education in this country and predominant negative views of homosexuals. "We should not have lectures that focus only on homosexuality. It should just be one part of the sexual education provided to young people before they enter puberty, when sexual activity often begins. For the time being, we have to deal with it through lectures first offered to medical students," he said.

Zhou Leiming admitted that the class has helped him overcome previous misconceptions and fears about homosexuals. "Even if we cannot fully understand these people, or if they have some weaknesses, we still need to respect them. That is the basis for real communication between people," he advocated.

Reporter Injured in Hunan Fire Treated in Beijing

By Zhao Hongyi

Yang Shuai, photographer for the Hunan Province-based *Hengyang Evening News* and a victim in the tragic fire that killed 20 early this month, arrived in Beijing last Sunday evening, not on his own two legs, but on a hospital stretcher. He is in town to undergo treatment for his injuries.

The 27-year-old photographer was seriously injured while covering fire-fighters battle against a blaze that consumed a residential building in Hengyang, Hunan, on the morning of November 3 (see story in November 7 issue of *Beijing Today*). The eight-storey structure collapsed, burying and killing 20 firefighters and injuring another rescue worker along with four photographers, including Yang, from local media organizations.

Of those four unfortunate photographers, Yang sustained the most serious injuries. After receiving emergency treatment in Hengyang, doctors said they feared he was paralyzed from the waist down. This week, doctors at the Beijing Bo'ai Hospital overseeing Yang's further treatment promised to do all they could to help the young man stand and walk again.

A staff member of the office of the hospital's president, surnamed Hao, told *Beijing Today* that a special task force led by a vice president of the hospital had been formed and started diagnosing Yang's condition and setting the course for his continued treatment.

Yang's pregnant wife has accompanied him to the capital. "We have dreamt of visiting Beijing our whole lives, but we never expected we would get here this way," Yang joked in front of a large collection of local reporters from his hospital bed on Monday.

Goodall in Town for Roots and Shoots Day

By Sun Ping

Beijing's second annual Roots and Shoots Day on Sunday drew Dr. Jane Goodall, famed animal behavior expert and the UN Messenger of Peace, to come to the capital.

More than 300 students from 25 local schools participated in the event. During the proceedings, Goodall gave Achievement Awards for Roots and Shoots to groups from domestic elementary schools, secondary schools and universities that have made contributions to environmental protection, animal protection and community improvement efforts in the past year.

Roots and Shoots is a global environmental and humanitarian program aimed at young people launched by the Jane Goodall Institute. Its mission is to foster respect and compassion for all living things, promote the understanding of all cultures and beliefs and inspire all individuals to take action to make the world a better place for the environment, animals and the human community.

Goodall is one of the most prominent figures in the international animal protection field, world-renowned and highly respected in both the scientific and lay communities. She travels extensively to share her message, hoping to inspire young people to make a difference in their world.



Jane Goodall with students and teachers from the international section of the Beijing No.55 Middle School

Photo by Sun Ping

By Chen Ying / Hans Leu
China plans to conduct human trials on a SARS vaccine next month

Clinical trials for a vaccine for severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) are set to begin by the end of December, Yin Hongzhang, head of the Biological Product Section of the State Food and Drug Administration, told *Xinhua News* on Saturday.

The vaccine's developer, Beijing Kexing Bio-product Company, has already completed pre-clinical trials of the vaccine on monkeys and has applied to the State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA) for clinical testing. Kexing started developing the vaccine at the end of April during the outbreak of the SARS epidemic in the Chinese mainland.



The Beijing Kexing's vaccine

The 55 doses provided by Kexing have all passed a test on new medicines for clinical application, according to the National Institute for the Control of Pharmaceutical and Biological Products, which tested the vaccine. Yin Hongzhang said the drug administration would process the application for clinical tests as quickly as possible.

Yin said tests of the vaccine on monkeys showed it was effective in fighting against SARS infection after the animals were exposed to the virus, and there were no serious side effects.

The Ministry of Health confirmed there had been no confirmed or suspected SARS cases on the Chinese mainland since August 16, when the last SARS patient on the mainland was discharged from hospital.

Stick that Needle into Me

People appear to be surprisingly enthusiastic about signing up as volunteers to test a new SARS vaccine developed in Guangdong.

Guangdong began to recruit volunteers to test the vaccine on Monday according to Guangdong-based *Information Times*. Many people have applied for the test since the news was released.

A 50-year-old retired woman, Ms Tao, called *Information times* this week asking about how to apply. Tao said she had not contracted SARS, but that she sympathized deeply with her colleagues and neighbors who had contracted it.

The volunteers will be chosen from different age groups, but most should be young people, experts said. Volunteers should also have no SARS history.

About 200 volunteers were needed for the first stage of the tests, while the third stage would need more than 1,000 volunteers.

The vaccine was submitted to State Food and Drug Administration at the same time as the vaccine developed by Beijing Kexing Bio-product Company.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has praised China's advances in development of SARS vaccines.

But the Beijing office of the WHO cautioned that many hurdles remained before a safe and effective vaccine could be produced.

"It is good news that advances are being made in China's development of a SARS vaccine," said Dr. Julie Hall, the leader of the SARS Response Team for the WHO in Beijing.

"But the testing process is long and there are many stages before a vaccine can be considered safe and effective," she said. "Also a vaccine is only one element in bringing SARS under control. We still need the fundamentals like good disease reporting and a surveillance system."

Despite the world's race to develop a vaccine for the flu-like respiratory disease, the WHO still sees a safe and effective vaccine in one to two years, Dr. Hall said. The WHO is urging scientists in vari-

ous countries to share their information and research results.

The WHO has increased the size of its SARS Response Team in China to about 12 and its international teams have been bringing expertise from around the world to offer guidance to China's SARS professionals, she added.

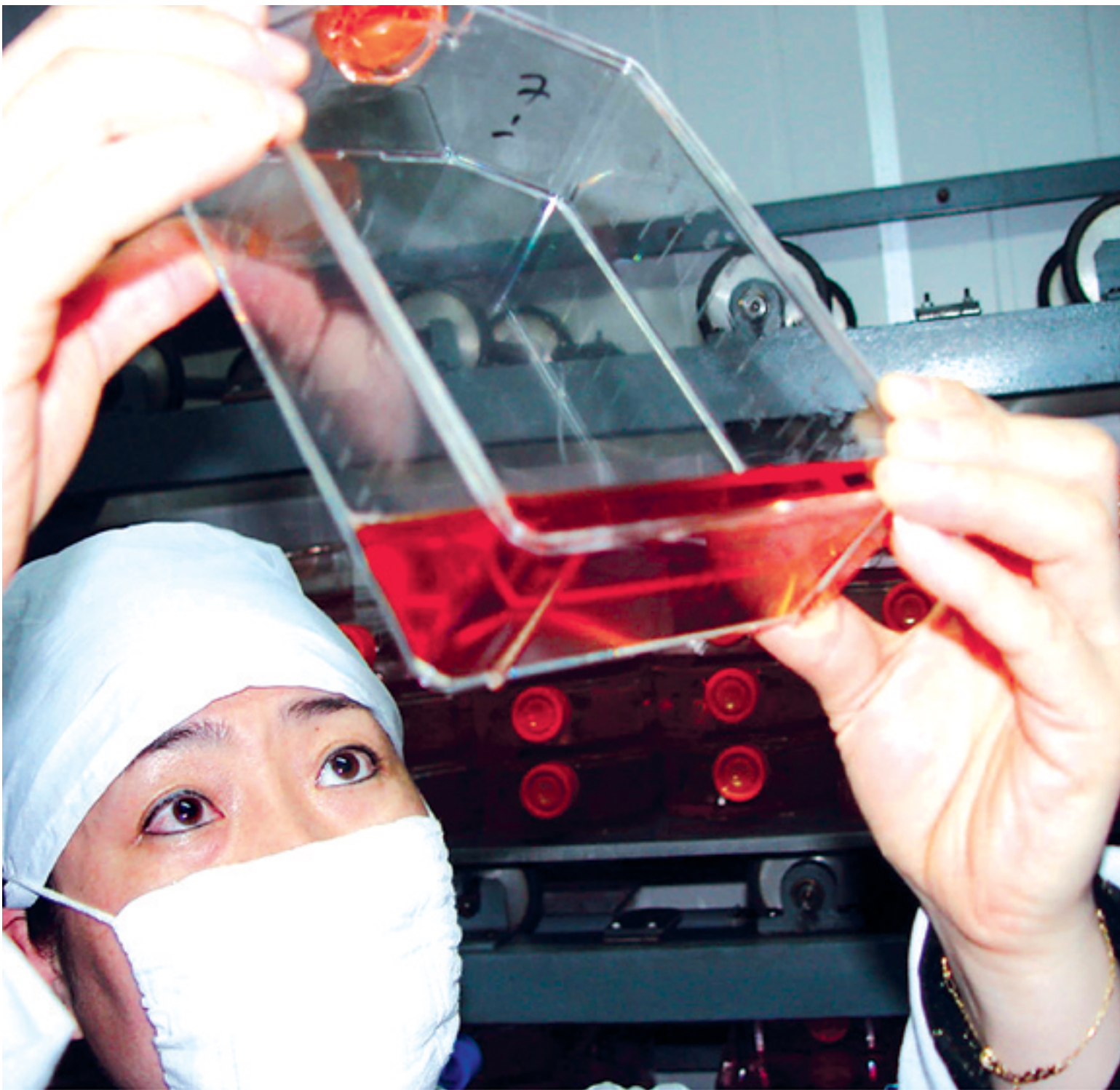
SARS Vaccine Not Expected for Several Years

A panel of international public health experts has said that it is not possible to develop a vaccine against SARS in less than two to five years. That means if a global outbreak of the flu-like respiratory disease should recur in 2004, public health workers will have to rely on the same tools with which they fought the sometimes-fatal illness this year.

"We must be ready to manage a possible resurgence of SARS through the control measures that work -- surveillance, early diagnosis, hospital infection control, contact tracing and international reporting," said Dr. Lee Jong-wook, director-general of the WHO. His remarks came in a November 5 press release issued after a two-day WHO meeting on SARS held in Geneva.

The normal development and trial period for a new vaccine runs up to five years. Attempting to accelerate that schedule would require "an unprecedented level of international cooperation," according to WHO vaccine specialist Dr. Marie-Paule Kieny.

Public health experts suspect it is likely that SARS will behave like other coronaviruses to which it is related. These cold and flu-causing microbes tend to become dormant in warmer months and re-emerge in colder months. With those colder months arriving in the Northern Hemisphere, health officials are taking steps to respond more rapidly than during the first outbreak.



A researcher from the National Vaccine & Serum Institute studying the SARS vaccine.

Photo by photocom

Hepatitis B Discrimination Case Stirs Debate

By James Liu / Wei Tingyu

China's first ever court case involving alleged discrimination against hepatitis B virus (HBV) carriers has just begun.

College graduate Zhang Jie (pseudonym) applied to the People's Court of Xinwu District in Wuhu, Anhui Province accusing the Personnel Bureau of Wuhu City of unfairly denying him a job on the grounds of his condition. The court accepted the case on November 14.

Zhang Jie took part in the provincial public service examinations in June and came top among about a hundred candidates for positions in Wuhu County Government Office. Unfortunately, in the following physical examination Zhang was found to be an HBV carrier, albeit with only a mild form of the disease. The Personnel Bureau informed Zhang he had been disqualified from consideration because of his health.

Zhang tried to negotiate with the Personnel Bureau but without success. So he decided to sue them.

Professor Zhou Wei of the Law School of Sichuan University volunteered to act as Zhang's lawyer. Zhou told *Chengdu Evening News* that Zhang had been the victim of discrimination which broke the constitution's regulations on the right to employment. "I think I have won the initial battle," Zhang Jie said to *Chengdu Evening News*.

A person is usually considered an HBV carrier if they are found to be positive in three out of five indexes in a hepatitis B examination. In this case, HBV carriers are then divided into two groups called *da san yang* and *xiao san yang*. Doctors consider the former to be active sufferers of the HBV virus, with a strong possibility of their spreading the virus, while



Zhou Wei

the latter group carry the virus in a relatively stable state. But after taking two HBV examinations in different hospitals Zhang Jie was found to belong to neither group as he was only positive in two indexes, meaning the likelihood of him infecting others is small.

Plague of HBV discrimination

According to statistics from the Ministry of Health, hepatitis B is prevalent in China. Since the founding of the country in 1949, about 700 million Chinese have suffered from the disease, and now there are around 120 million HBV carriers nationwide. Hepatitis B is a form of hepatitis caused by a DNA virus that lingers in the blood and has a long incubation period. It is usually transmitted by sexual contact and injection or ingestion of infected blood or other bodily fluids. But in China, hepatitis B is spread mainly by infected mothers to their newborn children.

"Those infected at a very young age are more likely to develop a serious, chronic infection," said Yang Jianjun, spokesman for Shanghai Health Bureau's Division of Diseases

Control. Most adults can avoid the disease through their own immunity system. The infection rate among adults is about two percent.

Even so, HBV carriers face major obstacles in qualifying for education, work and marriage. In almost every province, people with *da san yang* are rejected from public service, while different provinces have different regulations on recruiting people with *xiao san yang*. Guangdong Province, for instance, has stipulated that HBV carriers with *xiao san yang* are qualified to take part in public service examinations.

Currently, many companies and enterprises also refuse to employ HBV carriers. They ask those job-hunters who pass interviews to have a medical examination before signing a contract. Some enterprises may even fire their employees if they find they are HBV carriers.

Shanghai may seem like one of the more progressive cities in China, but HBV carriers have little opportunity to find employment in governmental departments. "Those with *da san yang* are absolutely disqualified," said an official from the Public Servant Administration Department of the Shanghai Personnel Bureau. "For those with *xiao san yang*, the decision depends on the different bureaus, which may have different requirements concerning their officials. Also, each bureau has its own criteria for physical examination." The official said that each bureau has the right to decide whether to recruit people with *xiao san yang*.

The issue came to national attention in April 2003, when a university student named Zhou Yichao stabbed two officials in Jiaxing City, Zhejiang Province killing one of them. After discov-

ering that he was an HBV carrier with *xiao san yang*, Zhou had been excluded from public service even after passing all the examinations and interviews. The Jiaxing Intermediate People's Court ruled that Zhou had committed intentional homicide and sentenced him to death.

It was reported that Zhou tore up the written verdict when it was handed to him in court in September. The case ignited heated debate about the rights of HBV carriers. Now Zhang's case has raised the issue again, and the argument about whether the numerous regulations on HBV carriers defy the constitution and HBV carriers' right to employment.

Legal opinion

The opinions of a group of legal experts were printed this week by *Jiancha Ribao*, a legal journal. Guo Chunming, a judge from Beijing No.1 Intermediate People's Court, did not agree with Professor Zhou Wei's assertion.

"The constitution stipulates that citizens have the right to work. But this only means the country should provide employment opportunities," Guo said. He believed the Personnel Bureau's decision didn't infringe Zhang Jie's right to work.

Professor Yang Jianshun of the Law School of Renmin University thought it was reasonable for companies and governmental organizations to set rules in hiring employees.

Wang Zhenmin, deputy dean of the Law School at Tsinghua University, also said Zhang Jie's right to work had not been infringed upon, but he said Zhang's right to equality had been violated.

"In Zhang Jie's case, he is not likely to infect other people with HBV so he should not be deprived of the equal right

to work," said Professor Jiang Ming'an of the Law School of Peking University. Jiang's opinion was supported by most of the media.

Constitutional dilemma

The recent abolition of the detention and deportation system was regarded as progress in the ongoing efforts to clear up grey areas of the constitution. But for now, if a person believes administrative regulations violate the constitution, judicial departments must be asked to rule on the matter.

However, China's legal system still lacks clear guidelines for constitutional proceedings. So launching constitutional lawsuits is still fraught with difficulty. Like Zhang Jie, people can begin administrative proceedings and seek individual compensation. The basic difference between constitutional and administrative proceedings lies in the result. Constitutional proceedings aim at revision of the administrative regulations, which can benefit the whole of society.

Give us a break

Besides the legal dilemma, to most HBV carriers, people's attitudes amount to a kind of discrimination against them. "It is also a violation of privacy," said one HBV carrier who asked to be identified as Hu. "An HBV carrier should have his or her own right to live, study and work," Hu told *Shanghai Daily*.

Professor Yang Jianshun of the Law School of Renmin University called on the government to establish and improve protection systems for HBV carriers.

"I hope what happened to Zhou and me will not happen to other HBV carriers," Zhang Jie told a reporter from *Beijing Youth Daily*. "But if I lose the case, I suppose I will just have to give up the idea of being a public servant and find some other direction," said Zhang.

By Ma Ning / Jiang Hao

Memories of the traffic chaos at the Atlanta Olympics are still fresh. Thousands of ticket-holders and athletes were stranded, waiting for their special buses to make their way through the congestion at the 1996 Games. Traffic became a major media story early in the games, rather than the sport. Jaques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) later said it had become a crucial issue to resolve. "The IOC is especially concerned with communications in host cities. It is a tough task to ensure every participant of the games enjoys fast and convenient transportation. The organizers of the 2004 Athens Olympics should pay special attention to the traffic problem in order to avoid the trouble which has arisen during recent years."

Athens already had a reputation for nightmarish traffic jams. So it came as a surprise when we arrived to walk out of the airport and be whisked down the new airport expressway into the center of town with relatively little delay. The road surface was flat and spacious and the road signs were all clear. It took us only 35 minutes to get to our hotel in central Athens. Later we learned that the expressway had only been put into use just three days before we came. During the games, thousands of athletes, coaches and tourists will enter Athens at the city's modern airport. This expressway will surely make a good impression on all the guests.

Heavy traffic in Athens

Traffic in downtown Athens remains heavy. The population in the capital city and the surrounding Attiki region is five million and the number of private cars is 1.9 million.

It is common for one family to own two or three cars. The network of roads in the old city center is dense and the roads are narrow. In some parts of the city many cars are parked on both sides of already crowded roads so that it's difficult for one car to pass. Athenians have become used to traffic jams.

The Athens Municipal Government has taken certain measures to ease the traffic pressure caused by private cars. For example, some roads have become part of one-way traffic systems. The authorities also introduced an even and odd-number license plate system for private cars, allowing them into the center of Athens on alternate days. However, many families in Athens have two cars, so they just use whichever car has the right number.

Departments join hands

During the Olympics the organizers will conduct stringent control over the transportation in Athens. Many vehicles will not be allowed to enter certain districts unless the owners have certificates issued by the 2004 Athens Olympics Organizing Committee (ATHOC). Parking near the venues will also be strictly controlled.

ATHOC has spared no effort to publicize traffic control to the public. A series of warm-up events have been held as a dry run for the Olympics. For instance, ATHOC, the Athens Communication Bureau and the Greek Bicycle Association launched a large-scale campaign to publicize traffic control plans during the Bicycle Time Trial held on August 15, 2003. The Communication Bureau distributed 10,000 copies of notices on traffic routes in coastal areas. From August 6 to 11, ATHOC distributed 40,000 leaflets and traffic guides with maps to each household in that area. Meanwhile, 2,000 posters with maps were also put up on the central streets. Local radio and TV stations broadcast detailed traffic notices daily. Advice notes were also posted on the windshields of all cars parked in the center of Athens to inform car owners of what was happening.

Customized traffic plan

For the 2004 Games, separate transport plans will be

Approaching Athens

The sixth in a series of seven special reports on the 2004 Olympics

Let on the Bus, or the Train

Athens prepares for Olympic traffic explosion



Photos by Cheng Tieliang

worked out for the athletes and officials and the tourists. Most people will use special buses. Important officials from the IOC and the Greek Olympic Committee, heads of state from different countries, leaders of international organizations and other VIPs will use special cars provided by sponsors. The athletes, coaches and other relevant people will take the shuttle buses between the Olympic Villages and venues. ATHOC will also provide athletes with shuttle buses from the airports to their accommodation, from games venues to training venues and from the Olympic Village to the city center.

During the Olympics the reporters covering the games will live in the Media Village and special hotels. The buses provided for them will mainly shuttle between the village, the Main Press Center and the International Broadcasting Center. Those journalists who live in Piraeus and other distant areas of Greece can use public transportation to come to the Information Center. All the sponsors for the 2004 Olympics will be concentrated in one or two hotels. They can enjoy special transportation services while visiting the sport items they sponsor.

Public transportation system will play a key role

Experience has shown at previous games that the best way to ensure everybody reaches their destination on time is to make full use of public transportation. Currently Athens is doing its best to advocate the use of this system so that people can gradually become accustomed to the situation in which the use of private cars will be strictly limited during the Olympics.

We saw many slogans and picture posters encouraging people to use public transport on buses and tramcars. Preferential traffic policies have also been drawn up to encourage careful use of cars.

The transportation of the tens of thousands of tourists and volunteers daily will depend on an efficient public transport system. From 13 to 29 August,

2004, people who hold the tickets to sport venues can use the system free of charge on the day when the match is being held.

Olympics promote development of transportation

When asked which Olympic Games was the most successful in handling traffic, Anita L. De-frantz, Vice-president of IOC in charge of traffic affairs answered, "the ancient Olympic Games." So Athens has a tough act to follow. It is hard to know how the ancient Greeks dealt with all the chariots, horses and other forms of transport, but as one philosopher noted, necessity is the mother of invention. The Athens Olympics have provided a golden opportunity for Athens to develop and improve its transportation system.

In this way alone, holding the games will bring substantial benefits to Athens. Modern highways with a total length of 120 kilometers are being built; 90 kilometers of road will be upgraded; and 40 new flyovers will be built. The subway line will also be extended to 7.7 kilometers. A tramcar network with a length of 23.7 kilometers will be built. The suburban railway line will cover a length of 32 kilometers. A new system for managing parking lots in central Athens will be developed. Several modern railway stations will be built and a super-modern traffic management center will also be set up.

Gianna Angelopoulou-Daskalaki, the chairperson of ATHOC, once proudly declared at one traffic conference, "The traffic improvement will be the most valuable legacy the Olympics will leave to Athens. Our city will boast new subway lines, a new tramcar system, a new suburban railway, new viaduct bridges, new roads and an Olympic loop line. After the games, transportation service here will be more efficient and environmentally-friendly and it will reach a wider range of areas, which can embody the Olympic spirit of faster, higher and stronger."

Rail System Reshapes Athens Transportation

By Ma Ning / Jiang Hao
Electrified railway system takes on a new look

The coming Olympics provides a golden opportunity for Athens to transform and upgrade its old electrified railway. We have been following the progress of this huge project. The Athens-Piraeus Electric Railway Authority (ISAP)'s 23 stations have been renovated and one new station is under construction. In order to meet the needs of the Olympics, twenty new trains have been purchased to increase the traffic volume by 24%. Some of the new trains have already been put into operation. These new trains have spacious and comfortable compartments and run smoothly. From 2001 to 2003, the number of passengers transported daily by ISAP increased from 370,000 to 410,000. The train departure interval will also be shortened from the present 180 seconds to 125 seconds. Besides the electrified railway, the 32-kilometer-long suburban railway connecting the city center with the new airport will be completed by next May.

Subway: the most powerful means of transportation

On its official website, ATHOC said the Athens subway system was the largest, most complicated and important project being undertaken in preparation for the games. ATHOC said it would rely on the subway to provide, fast, practical, comfortable and safe transport.

Athens has two subway lines, both of which have been in operation for three years. The two lines are now being extended. One 1.5-kilometer-long section and one 2.8-kilometer-long section will be added to Line 2. A new line is being constructed to connect the Greek Ministry of National Defense and Stavros Transfer Station. According to the extension plan, the subway system will serve the whole Attiki Region in 2004. In Stavros Station, the passengers can conveniently change to suburban railway and all the northeastern buses.

Tramcar returns after 45 years

In the summer of 2000, ATHOC decided to connect the southern suburbs with the city center and a tramcar railway plan was selected. Now in Athens two lines of tramcar railway are under construction and will cover a total length of 24 kilometers, with a departure interval of 35 minutes. The two lines connect two of the three main Olympic stadiums with the city center. It is also very convenient to transfer from the tramcar lines to the electrified railway and two subway lines.

Back to the Grasslands



By Guo Yuandan

Lu Tongjing, 60, is used to people expressing interest in his work. His photo exhibition last year about environmental degradation and desertification in Inner Mongolia was picked up by the media and shocked millions of people. But though many have encouraged him, few sponsors have come forward to help him with the high costs of his travel and photographic expenses. Still, Lu has no intention of giving up.

Talking through a camera

"I liked taking photographs as a child. I went to Inner Mongolia during the Cultural Revolution. At first, I was a worker in a coal mine, but I always practiced taking photos in my spare time. Afterwards I set up a photo studio." Thanks to the skills he developed, Lu was later able to make a good living as a photographer.

Lu's life changed when he came across an eccentric Japanese man near his home in Inner Mongolia in 1995. Lu heard the man was planting seeds at the edge of the desert trying to re-cultivate lost land. Lu felt surprised and puzzled about why a Japanese person would want to come and do this in China. "At that time I was quite well known in Inner Mongolia because I often published landscape photos in local newspapers. I wanted to take some photos of the old man," Lu recalled.

To Lu's disappointment, the old Japanese man didn't want his picture taken. "He told me that he came to plant, not take photos. But I stayed and helped him for three days. The local people all knew about him and said that he came to plant every year."

The old man came to plant again the next year and Lu went to join him again. After that he agreed for Lu to take some photographs. Lu found himself becoming wrapped up in this new cause. "I saw and heard things I had never known during the time I spent with this man," Lu says. "I remembered grass growing up to two meters high when I first went to Inner Mongolia in the 1970s. But now the grass hardly reaches three centimeters."

Another thing that caught Lu's eye was that cashmere goats were wearing protective clothing. "At first I thought it was funny. I asked the owner about it. After hearing the



Only the best equipment

explanation, I felt sad."

Cashmere is a very lucrative source of income for the inhabitants of this region. Because of the proximity of the desert, agricultural production is nearly impossible. Japanese investors initiated a cashmere project in the Alxa region in 1982. Now there are 1.6 million animals here, 80% of which are goats. However, no more than 200,000 animals should be kept in the region in order to allow for sustainable animal husbandry, according to the Environmental Bureau of Inner Mongolia. As a result, the sensitive ecosystem of these arid regions has been destroyed by keeping too many goats.

Because of hunger, the goats had to eat almost anything, and running out of edible leaves, grass or roots, they even started to eat each other's fur. In order to protect the precious cashmere wool, goat owners have to cover their goats in jackets.

"I was astonished," says Lu. "I only graduated from primary school, I didn't know anything about this before. I decided to record what was happening with these photos to let more people know."

Sell the house to keep going

Lu started traveling to the desert border regions in Inner Mongolia, Gansu, Shanxi and Hebei for several months each year from 1995 to 1999.

The more he saw, the more he felt sad. "The life of people at the edge of the desert is harsh and pitiful. In many settlements, the wells have dried up. The people must walk miles each day to get water for their family. The kids cannot go to school. They don't learn how to read or

write, instead they learn how to steer a donkey-pulled cart to get water," Lu recalls. "Camels can survive one whole month without food or drink in the desert. But I saw dead camels along the road. Due to the drought, the camels cannot find any food on their former grazing grounds. "Malian" grass, the main food for camels, has disappeared from most meadows in Alxa."

During his travels, Lu collected about 20,000 photos documenting the dramatic decline of environmental conditions in China's northwest.

"I thought I should hold an exhibition in Beijing, as it's the center of politics, the economy and culture in China. I wanted more people to know what was happening." From 1999, Lu came to Beijing many times, hoping to find someone to help him set up an exhibition. "No one would help me. They said what a great thing I was doing, but they were sorry and they couldn't help me." Lu contacted *Beijing Youth Daily* and the paper published Lu's story, titled "The camels are dying" in 1999. In early 2000, Beijing experienced an unprecedented smothering by tons of sand and dust blown from the north. *Beijing Youth Daily* published Lu's story again, contributing to his reputation in Beijing. Many other papers reported his story. "Some companies began to contact me and said they wanted to help. But I was not a handsome star, and couldn't advertise anything. The result was that no-one was willing to sponsor an exhibition." Lu started to describe himself as a helpless celebrity.

Lu decided to sell his house in Inner Mongolia to fund his exhibition.

The house sold for 79,000 yuan.

With the help of Beijing Nature Museum, Lu Tongjing succeeded in finally holding the exhibition in June 2002. Lu's photos shocked the visitors and were widely distributed in newspapers and the Internet.

Glory in being a volunteer

Lu was described as an environmental volunteer in one of the media reports about him. "I never knew I was a volunteer before. I only do what I want to do. I like taking photos, whether a grassland scene or the decline of environmental conditions. But the images of the failing environment move and interest me. And I think it's more meaningful than pretty landscape pictures."

Lu has maintained his photographic cause for the last eight years, despite the lack of any financial backing. He hadn't worried about money in earlier years, because his studio in Inner Mongolia always did well. But the situation changed in 1998. Lu's studio was forced to be torn down because of city planning. Unfortunately Lu couldn't get any compensation because he didn't move out before the government deadline had expired. "So I became jobless," Lu says. "But I wasn't going to stop traveling. I spent all my savings on it. I had to sell my house to fund the exhibition. I feel proud about that. I thank the situation that forced me to succeed."

Thanks to the exhibition, Lu Tongjing had again become a celebrity. In Beijing, many universities and environment groups invited him to speak. Fortunately, Lu has a cousin who has three houses in Beijing and who lent one of them to Lu for free. Lu's wife also came to Beijing. In order to go on studying the changing environment, Lu often returns to the desert areas of Inner Mongolia. The cost is huge, including tickets, hotel fees and film, about 3,000 yuan for every trip. "My wife gets a pension of 500 yuan per month, which covers our living costs. The remuneration for my photos was only 4000 yuan this year, which wasn't enough for my travels. So I wanted to find a job in Beijing, but it seems I am too old. My daughter gave me some money so I could continue my work."

Lu and his wife never go to restaurants, or go to see shows in Beijing. Their clothes are mainly given to them by friends, and Lu cannot afford a mobile phone.

"I never regret what I have chosen. I'm following my dream and helping more people to care about the environment."

I want to go back

Staying in Beijing gives Lu the chance to communicate with many authors, but he doesn't like the city. "The pollution is very heavy. Many old people walk a dog in the street. I often worry about their health. I also miss my friends in the grasslands."

A new hope emerged recently when Germany's Heinrich Boell Foundation decided to help Lu publish a book of photos. Lu is both happy and sad about this. "I don't understand it. I'm trying to protect my country. But it is foreigners that are helping me to publish the book. I would have hoped that Chinese people would want to help me." The book will cost 80 yuan, and the initial print run is for 5,000 copies. Lu hopes he will make enough money from book sales to buy a new house in Inner Mongolia.



Packing for another trip

Photos by Lou Qiyong and Lu Tongjing



By Iris Miao

Selected from cultural relics excavated in Ningxia and Inner Mongolia since 1949, 145 Western Xia artifacts are now on display at the Beijing Museum. Over 50 of these are classed as first grade national treasures.

It is the first time that such a large and comprehensive exhibition centering on the Western Xia Dynasty has been held in Beijing, encompassing language, metal-casting techniques, architectural stone carving techniques, porcelain and Buddhist art.

“The fact that over one third of the exhibits are national and first grade treasures makes this exhibition a must-see for anyone with a passion for antiques and history,” Sun Wuyi, director of the Beijing Museum curatorial department, told *Beijing Today*, “It’s a great pity that due to time and budget constraints, no catalogue has been published for the show.”

On entering the exhibition hall, the first eye-catching artifact is a gilt bronze ox, 1.2 meters in length and 188 kilograms in weight. The ox was excavated in 1972 from the Imperial Mausoleum of the Western Xia, on the outskirts of Yinchuan, the capital of Ningxia. The way the whole body seems to radiate a soft, golden light and its vivid appearance makes it one of the most precious pieces in the Ningxia Museum.

On display in a showcase at the rear of the exhibition hall are a volume of Buddhist inscriptions (*Jixiang Bian Zhi Kou He Ben Xu*) and a scroll of the cursive script of the Western Xia language, a language that was long lost and is today understood by only a few scholars. “Only 10 or so people in China can read this language nowadays,” said Sun.

The volumes of Western Xia inscriptions were found in 1991, when the Square Pagoda at Baisigou, Helan Mountain was broken into by thieves looking for antiques. Archaeologists who went to the site to conduct a rescue excavation found nine volumes of print, with a total of 120,000 characters of the Western Xia language. The State Bureau of Culture Relics later determined these to be China’s earliest wooden movable-type printing works, and the Western Xia Dynasty became recognized as the birth place of Chinese wooden movable-type printing. The discovery pushed back the history of the use of wooden movable-type printing to 130 years earlier than was previously thought.

“The most conspicuous characteristic of the Western Xia culture lies in its architectural carvings and Buddhist statues,” Sun said. Yet the many delicately designed porcelain wares and the exquisite gold wares featured in the exhibition indicate that there is much still to be discovered about this mysterious kingdom that lasted less than 200 years.

Where: Beijing Museum, 13 Guozijian Jie (opposite Lama Temple)
When: 9 am-5pm, till December 15
Admission: 10 yuan

Glory of a Lost Nation

Cultural Relics from the Western Xia Dynasty at the Beijing Museum

The Western Xia Dynasty, with its capital in Xingqingfu (now Yinchuan), was established by Li Yuanhao, leader of the Dangxiang nationality in 1038. Over a period of less than two centuries, it became a powerful empire covering today’s Ningxia, Qinghai, Gansu and Inner Mongolia, with a highly-developed culture comparable with those of the Song, Liao and Jin dynasties. Yet in the several hundred years after it was destroyed by Mongolian troops in 1227, knowledge of the Western Xia culture faded into history. It was not until 1804, when scholar Zhang Shu discovered stone tablets inscribed with the Western Xia language in Wuwei, Gansu Province, that the lost ancient kingdom was revealed to the public.



Clockwise from top left: stone tablet with Western Xia script; porcelain jar with cut lotus design; bamboo carving fragment; gilt bronze statue of General Wei Tu; Arhat statue; wood figures; headless Buddha statue; gilt bronze ox.

Photos by Miao Yajie

Buddhist Statues Rebuilt in Dajue Temple

By Chen Ying

The first phase of a project to reconstruct the clay sculptures at Dajue Temple was completed last Friday. The 24 replica sculptures are now in place in their original settings at the temple. The second phase of the reconstruction, the painting of the sculptures, will begin next April.

Dajue Temple, originally built during the Liao Dynasty (907-1125) and reconstructed in its present form in 1428, during the reign of Ming emperor Xuande, lies at the foot of Mount Yangtai, northwest of Beijing.

Due to poor maintenance, cracks between the base and main body of the suspended clay sculpture of Guanyin (Avalokitesvara) in the temple’s Amitayus Hall had become so big, repair work was urgently needed to prevent the base from falling off.

Meanwhile, the statues of Maitreya Buddha, the Four Heavenly Kings, Skanda and 18 Arhat, had been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. “To restore the historical relics and allow tourists a better understanding of traditional Chinese culture, we decided to remold those Buddhist statues while repairing the Guanyin sculpture,” said Sun Rongfen, director of Beijing Xishan Dajue Temple Administration.

“In Beijing, it’s difficult to find craftsmen skilled at sculpting traditional Buddhist statues. So we had to go to Shanxi Province, which is well-known for preserving traditional arts and crafts,” Sun said. Eventually, the administration invited Shanxi Yitian Sculpture Company to take on the job. “The craftsmen in the company are very experienced and have worked on many projects in Shanxi and nationwide.”

“The most difficult issue is to endow the faces of those statues with a suitable expression,” Sun said, adding that the expression and gesture of each figure should accord with Buddhist tradition, “The experts that the administration invited only those craftsmen with knowledge of Buddhism, who could make the expression of those statues so exact and vivid.”

The project will cost about 610,000 yuan, according to Sun. “Now we have to wait while the statues dry naturally, before painting them next spring. We plan to unveil those statues to the public on June 1 next year.”

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Save 798!

Community rallies to threat of destruction of innovative art space

By Darlene Lee

From a small factory compound in the northeast of Beijing, just outside the Fourth Ring Road, has emerged the freewheeling product of fertile imaginations: the Dashanzi Art District. Oft-compared to New York's original Soho area, the 798 Factory District now hosts a range of trendy cafes and restaurants, galleries and resident artists.



Timezone 8, Asia's most comprehensive English-language art bookstore



The opening of the Sino-German show Left Hand, Right Hand at the 798 Space in September drew a sizeable crowd of art insiders and outsiders.

Plans underfoot by Qixing Group, the company with jurisdiction over the 798 Factory, to hand the area over to real estate developers has dismayed both art circles insiders and the general public. Repeated attempts to contact the office of the general manager of Qixing Group for comment have been unsuccessful. Should no changes occur, demolition of 798 would begin sometime in late 2004 to be completed by 2005.

"Dashanzi adds to the quality of life in Beijing, enriches the city culturally, draws visitors and enhances Beijing's international prestige," notes gallery owner Xu Yong, who was the first entrepreneur to organize hutong tours and thus contributed to saving what is left of the city's historic alleys today. "So while it may not rival purely commercial areas in terms of profit generation, it does add immeasurable value to Beijing." Xu opened Dashanzi's first and largest gallery, 798 Space, in September of 2002.

Robert Bernell, owner of 798's first art business, opened Timezone 8 in February 2002. Now Asia's most comprehensive English-language contemporary art bookstore, Timezone 8 features over 1,000 contemporary art titles. "798 is ultimately a great coming together of software and hardware, artists and

art activists like Xu Yong along with Bauhaus architecture in an accessible part of town," observes Bernell.

Many of the businesses operating in 798 are still struggling to break even as the nascent domestic contemporary art market finds its feet, but this labor of love has fervent acolytes. "It's not about having to make it economically appealing in the short run for the operating company, but changing the perception of value," points out Huang Re, artistic director of Beijing Tokyo Art Projects and manager of At Café.

What ultimately is important about 798 is the idea of a viable contemporary art center in Beijing is made a reality. "The good news is that people are now aware of the potential use value of warehouse space in Beijing, which can and will be replicated in other parts of the city. When Soho got built up and expensive, then everyone moved to Chelsea. There will be a Chelsea in Beijing," predicts Bernell.

Since July 1 this year, no further spaces have been leased, despite an increasingly long waiting list. This has put a screeching halt to the rapid organic growth of 798 while lateral-thinkers flooded next door to the 706 Factory, filling it to capacity. Artist and fashion designer Feng

Ling notes, "Although 706 is not in danger of being torn down, having half of the Dashanzi Art District disappear if 798 is demolished significantly diminishes the point of being here." Neighboring gallery manager Nan Nan from The Box (part of the Art Seasons Group in Singapore) concurs, "It would be a real shame if Dashanzi Art District was demolished, as we would lose many good neighbors and partners doing art work in this district."

Unique in its track record for drawing crowds outside art circles, the general public will feel the loss keenly. "Progress at what price sprang to mind when I heard that 798 will be demolished in the not-so-distant future. The 798 project is a miracle.

"I didn't believe it until I saw it," says frequent Dashanzi visitor and long-term Beijing resident Matt Brosenne, international business manager at CSM. "Not only artistic value but possibly tremendous economic value will be destroyed. At the very least, building what already exists at 798 into future plans is easily a possibility."

Exploring these possibilities, plentiful brainstorming sessions have thus far netted no concrete results. Huang notes that, "While signs of increasing official awareness of the value of Dashanzi are

increasing, particularly internationally, it's hard to say what will happen." Bernell adds that "There was a proposal to leave the back of 798 as is, as a cultural section, with the rest being demolished for development but there's been no word back from that idea."

Undeterred by the specter of possible demolition, the creative entrepreneurs at the 798 Factory continue to plan blockbuster contemporary art events, hoping public support may win them a reprieve. "Dashanzi combines cutting edge contemporary arts, services and location to create a unique energy. It would be a shame for Beijing to lose its first hip contemporary arts district so soon after it proved its viability," notes Clayton Fitts, vice president of advertising sales at Virgin Radio China.

"It's important to remember that progress is not about wiping out the old and bringing in the new, but actually creating something better. The world is full of wonderful new offices and residences but now there is a fantastic opportunity to break away from our normal thinking and create a new socially and economically viable proposition. My hope is that the middle road can be found, one that meets the needs of all," concludes Brosenne.

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China Fashion on the Catwalk

By Shan Jinliang

The curtain came down on China Fashion Week Wednesday, after 28 shows in the space of seven days at China World Hotel and the Beijing Hotel.

Organized by the China Fashion Association, Fashion Week invited some of the world's top fashionistas, including Didier Grumbach, president of Chamber Syndicale, French fashion's governing body and Lin Chunyao, director of Taiwan-based Phoebes magazine, to select the best designers from the fashion contests.

The event included fashion shows; the annual selections of best designers, models, photographers and commentators; the selection of emerging fashion designers and design contests. Among the shows, "Experiencing White Collar" Fu Kai Ready-to-Wear Collections, the premiere showing of Ne Tiger evening wear, China Children's-wear Trends and Mark Cheung Fashion Collections attracted the biggest crowds.

Since it was initiated in 1997, China Fashion Week has become the largest fashion show in China, growing from just three shows to this year's 28. From this year, the event is being held twice a year, featuring autumn/winter fashion collections in March and spring/summer collections in November.



China Children's-wear Trends 2004/5 at Beijing Hotel November 23



"Experiencing White Collar" Fu Kai Ready-to-Wear Collections 2004 at Beijing Hotel November 21



Gloria — Jin Hui Fashion Collections at China World Hotel November 24 Photo By Lu Beifeng

Pop Singers Perform for Charity

By Hans Leu

A charity pop concert at the Capital Gymnasium by performers from Hong Kong Emperor Entertainment Group (EEG) last Saturday left fans somewhat underwhelmed, despite the good cause for which it was staged.

Billed as "No Hepatitis Forever," the concert was held in memory of Tam Roman, a Hong Kong pop star popular in Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland for three decades, who died of hepatitis last October. The concert was organized by Chinese Foundation For Hepatitis Prevention and Control, Cheng Siyuan Foundation for Hepatitis Studies and Wu Jieping Medical Foundation.

The performance by many of the singers highlighted the problems that currently beset the Hong Kong pop music industry. Increasingly, young, good looking singers are turned into "stars" by way of expensive promotional campaigns run by record companies. Often they have little singing talent, and limited capacity to improve, their job is simply to release albums as quickly as possible. If they cannot make money for the company within a short period of time, they will be replaced by



Joey Yung

Photo By Lu Beifeng

even younger singers. Meanwhile, local composers have fewer opportunities for their music to be heard, as it is seen as more cost effective to simply tack Chinese lyrics onto overseas hits.

One of the few highlights of the evening was an appearance by film superstar Jackie Chan, whose singing sins fans were more than happy to forgive.

More Turandot, Less Puccini

By Wang Fang

A Chinese interpretation of Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot* premiered at Chang'an Theater on Sunday under the title *Princess Turandot*.

Transformed from an Italian to a Peking Opera by playwright Wu Ji-ang, the new work was performed by the National Peking Opera Theater of China, with Deng Min and Huang Bingqiang in the roles of Turandot and Calaf.

Reaction from the audience on opening night was mixed, perhaps not surprisingly, given the cultural gulf between the two opera forms.

Wu made several changes to the story for his version. One of the most obvious was that the role of Prince Calaf's young female servant was replaced by the character Princess Lu Ling. According to Wu, the purpose of the change was to add complexity to the plot and sharpen the conflict between the characters, as well as to make it more "Chinese." In his program notes Wu wrote "The *Turandot* we saw in the (original) opera is an oriental princess created by westerners in accordance with their understanding of the East. She is a powerful figure exerting control over men. In the context of Chinese culture, she is not a lovely woman. In the Peking opera version, I tried to dig out her feminine side, as a woman who is pursuing her love."

However, the original role of Liu, the faithful servant girl who follows

Prince Calaf, takes care of his father and finally dies for him, has earned recognition from the audience for almost 80 years as an example of Puccini's heroine, sweet, obedient young woman, powerless and doomed to suffer and die for love. Liu is a contrast to Turandot. The deletion of this role seemed to unbalance the conflict of the play.

In the Peking opera version of *Turandot*, Wu borrows elements of ballet, Chinese folk dance and folk music, combining them with Puccini's original melodies. But in the first day's performance, at least, the music and dance seemed to lack harmony. For example, the love song Princess Lu Ling croons for *Turandot* does not use the vocal music of Peking opera. In addition, the ballet and Chinese folk music used in the play seemed at times disconnected with the plot. The yin-yang (feminine and masculine) dance in Turandot's dream created an obvious discord with the aesthetic style of Peking opera, explaining the laughter from the audience.

Turandot is part of the standard repertoire of virtually every major opera company in the world, while every step in the process of reforming Peking opera will draw comments from scholars, performers and critics, no matter whether it is deemed a success or a failure. Without doubt this *Princess Turandot* will at least be remembered by its audience.

北京青年报
BEIJING TODAY
今日北京

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First Native Son in NBA Cut By Clippers

By Hou Mingxin

Last Saturday, the career of Wang Zhizhi, the first Chinese player in the NBA, hit a low point when he was released by the Los Angeles Clippers to make room for journeyman point guard Doug Overton.

The 26-year-old Chinese center was originally picked by the Dallas Mavericks in the second round of the 1999 NBA Draft. Wang joined the Clippers in October last year as a free agent after one and a quarter seasons in Dallas.

The 2.16-meter Wang signed a three-year, \$6 million dollar contract and appeared in 43 games during parts of two seasons with the Clippers, averaging 4.3 points a game in just two appearances this season.

The cut has cast doubt on Wang's future in the league, especially now that he has been greatly overshadowed by Yao Ming, the star Chinese center of the Houston Rockets.

Relations between Wang and the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA), the basketball governing body of China, have grown worse over the past two years since he refused several times to go home and represent China at major international competitions.

Due in part to Wang's absence, defending champion China lost to South



Wang Zhizhi (left) looks on from the bench during a Clippers game against the Utah Jazz on November 26, 2002 at the Staples Center. Photo by Photocom

Korea in the finals of last year's Busan Asian Games and suffered another embarrassing result in the 2002 World Championships in the US, where expectations for the team were high.

Wang has said that he wanted to make some kind of deal with Chinese sports authorities in order to continue playing in the NBA, but the CBA has openly criticized him for lack of professionalism, discipline and concern for national interests, and expelled him from

the Chinese national team last year.

Since the news of Wang's release came out, the one-time hero has become a hot topic in the domestic media and on the Internet, with many people expressing beliefs that Wang's bad luck is deserved.

The CBA has not yet made any official comment on Wang Zhizhi's cut by Clippers. Li Yuanwei, director of the association, told Sohu.com on Sunday that it was not the right time for his

association to release an official comment, but did say that Wang had a few choices in front of him.

When asked if the registration process would be a problem for Wang's return to play in the CBA, Li said if Wang really wanted to come back, he did not think registration would be a problem.

Bayi, Wang's former Chinese club, has extended a welcome to him to come back. The former league champions are struggling this season following the retirements of several veteran players.

Adijiang, Bayi's head coach, told the Shenyang-based *Balls Weekly* on Sunday that the team's door is open to Wang, and Sohu.com reported that senior squad officials have tried to contact their former star.

The same day, Yao Ming expressed wishes that his former national squad teammate find a new team soon through his official website, yaoming.net. Yao added he hopes they will be able to play together for China at next year's Athens Olympics.

Chen Weimin, Wang Zhizhi's friend and translator in the US, was quoted on Sunday by the Shanghai-based *Oriental Sports Daily* as saying that Wang would definitely stay in the NBA this year.

According to a survey conducted by Sina.com on Sunday, 46.39 of percent people think Wang should find another NBA team, 27.47 percent believe he should use this event as a chance to reconcile with China's sports leaders and return to the CBA, 16.58 percent think Wang should retire and 9.56 percent suggest Wang play in a lower US league.

Wang Zhizhi has not made any comment on his release by the Clippers or his plans for the future.

Olympic Door Opens to Transsexuals

By Hou Mingxin

For the first time in the history of the Olympic Games, transgendered athletes will be permitted to compete in the Olympics under new rules being finalized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Last month, the IOC held a meeting in Sweden and heard from medical experts who all agreed that the transgendered should be allowed to compete in their corrected sexuality. The IOC will announce its policy in the next few weeks.

"We will have no discrimination," said IOC medical director Patrick Schamasch in an interview with the *Associated Press* last Thursday. "The IOC will respect human rights."

The athletes will have to have completed surgery and lived in their corrected sexuality for a period of time prior to being approved for competition. The rule covers both male-to-female and female-to-male cases.

The exact length of the waiting period has not been determined. Schamasch said officials want to make sure that any side effects of hormone therapy have worn off.

Schamasch said he did not know whether there were any potential transsexual athletes preparing to compete in next summer's Athens Olympics, but noted that several international sports federations have asked the IOC for guidance.

Some contend transsexual athletes have a physical advantage against other women. Men have higher levels of testosterone and greater muscle-to-fat ratio and heart and lung capacity. However, doctors say, testosterone levels and muscle mass drop after hormone therapy and sex-change surgery, according to the *Associated Press* last Thursday.

Until 1999, the IOC conducted gender verification tests at the Olympics, but the controversial screenings were dropped before the 2000 Sydney Games.

One reason for the change was that not all women have standard female chromosomes. In addition, there are cases of people who have ambiguous genitalia or other congenital conditions.

For example, in January 1992 a French medical association declared that the chromosome test being given to women athletes at the Winter Olympics at Albertville, France, could result in the disqualification of women who could actually bear children.

In 1996, the IOC replaced chromosome testing of women with DNA testing, which also came under criticism from prominent geneticists because of its imprecision in determining gender.

Delegates to the first World Conference on Women and Sport sponsored by the IOC in 1996 urged the IOC to discontinue gender testing.

In the absence of any satisfactory testing to determine gender, the IOC, beginning with the 2000 Sydney Olympics and including the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games, limited gender verification "on an experimental basis" to a visual inspection performed by a medical officer in whose presence the athlete was required to provide a urine sample for drug testing. While this visual screening could prevent men from competing as women, a post-operative male-to-female transsexual or a surgically corrected intersexed person could go unnoticed.

Over the decades, there have been various cases of transgender athletes drawing controversy.

One of the most famous examples in Olympic history was Stella Walsh, who won gold in the 100 meters at the 1932 Games and silver in 1936. She was found to have male genitals and both male and female chromosomes on her death in 1980.

Another famous case of transsexuals in sports involves American Renee Richards, formerly Richard Raskin, who played on the women's tennis tour in the 1970s.

Renee Richards had been an ophthalmologist and a moderately good tennis player before she transitioned in the mid-1970s.

In 1976 at age 52, she entered a women's tennis tournament where she was both read and recognized.

The ensuing battle between Richards and sporting authorities made headline news for several weeks.

Richards went to court to defend her right to be recognized as female. The court ruled that transsexuals after full transition and sex reassignment surgery were legally the new sex. This established an important precedent not just for sports, but for all aspects of civil and private life involving transsexual persons.

After the controversy died down, Richards played tennis as a woman, and it became evident that her medical history did not give her an advantage in performance.

More recently, Canada's Michelle Dumaresq has made news competing as a mountain bike racer. Dumaresq had sex reassignment surgery in 1996 and competed for Canada at last year's World Championships in Austria, where she finished 24th in the downhill event.

Chinese Star Set to Enter Red Devils' Roster

By Zhang Bo

Domestic football fans are in a tizzy over the prospect of seeing two Chinese players take the field in top teams in England's Premier League. Sun Jihai, who holds a firm position as a defender for Manchester City, may soon get some compatriot company in the league at rival team Manchester United.

That squad is preparing the transfer of Dong Fangzhuo, the 18-year-old star of Chinese first division giant Dalian Shide, as part of its ambitious Asian development program.

According to last Monday's *Titan Sports*, at a news conference held on November 13, Sir Alex Ferguson, Manchester United's head coach, expressed stepped up interest in procuring the Chinese forward. Ferguson got the media wheels churning harder when he said that in the next several weeks, a young Chinese player would join his squad.

According to a report on the website Tom Sports Net on October 29, Manchester United has made a firm bid of £ 1 million (\$1.69 million) for the promising Chinese player.

A rising star

Besides a good attitude, Dong is blessed with pace, power and lift. He jumps like a basketball player and has equal long-distance speed as his teammate Hao Haidong, widely regarded as China's top striker.

Dong, promoted to the first squad of Dalian Shide last year, fired two shots during his debut on August 19, in which Dalian Shide won 3-2 against the junior national team of Saudi Arabia at the country's King's Cup held in the city of Abha. Dong also scored in Dalian's Asian Champions League match this March in South Korea.

He has been called Hao Haidong's successor and was picked among applicants from six top Chinese league clubs



Dong Fangzhuo (blue) Photo by Photocom



Gymnast Takes It on the Head

Tuesday, Chinese gymnast Feng Jing slipped off the parallel bars and crashed to the floor during the second Asian Gymnastics Championships in Guangzhou, China. The 18-year-old all-round champion of the 2001 World Gymnastics Championships could not move at first after his head punctured the floor and was rushed to a local hospital, where his injuries were deemed not serious.

Xinhua Photo

to attend a two-week training session at Manchester in September.

While Dong was at Old Trafford, Ferguson saw him training a couple of times and was sufficiently impressed to extend his original two-week stint to a month.

Behind the deal

According to last Monday's *Titan Sports*, Dong Fangzhuo's move to the Red Devils signals the start of Manchester United's plan to aggressively develop the Asian market.

An article in *Titan Sports* last Monday reported that Manchester United has around 20 million dedicated fans in Asia, half of whom are from China. The team's top status suffered a slight blow this summer when Real Madrid and its roster of global stars including David Beckham, Zinedine Zidane, and Ronaldo, came to China on its lucrative Asian tour.

An important part of Manchester United's game plan in the domestic market is pursuing a large-scale cooperation campaign, including bilateral exchange of players and coaches, with seven-time Chinese league champions Dalian Shide.

A probable motivating factor in the British team's move to solidify its position in China is the success of Chinese defender Sun Junhai, who has played at Manchester City since being drafted in 2001 and has developed a huge fan base at home.

He is one of two Chinese currently in the Premier League, the other being Li Tie, a midfielder for Everton. Both men are on China's national team.

An estimated 100 million Chinese fans tuned in to the live broadcast of a game between Manchester City and Everton, featuring the two home stars, in 2002.

An article in last week's *China Soccer Weekly* speculated that a similar Chinese double play in Manchester would likely generate even more excitement in this country.

Path not completely clear

According to a source quoted in the Shenyang-based *Liaoshen Evening News* last week, while Manchester's £ 1 million offer is by no means an insult, the bid would have to be raised because Dong is widely regarded as Chinese football's brightest rising star.

Lin Lefeng, general manager of

Dalian Shide, told *China Soccer Weekly* last week that his team is more than willing to help Dong move to England, as they did with Sun Jihai. He added that because sponsor Shide Group ranked amongst the richest enterprises in China, money was never an issue for the club.

"Our attitude is very positive, but the transfer is still at a preliminary stage," said Lin. "Manchester United has offered a transfer fee of over £ 1 million, but Shide's stance is firm, that is, we hope that Dong could join Manchester United by means of a long-term loan."

Other figures from Chinese football have expressed views that it may be too early for Dong to move to European play.

"From the perspective of physical condition, Dong is among the first class of soccer players. However, his technical level and personal communication abilities still need to be improved. I think it would be better for him to practice more in the Chinese soccer league and then move to Manchester United," Milorad Kosanovic, Dalian Shide head coach, told the Guangzhou-based *Soccer News* on November 10.



Nandaoyucun Restaurant

By James Liu

Workers' Stadium has long held a special place in capital football fans' hearts as the venue for the matches of local heroes Beijing Hyundai. Yet a few years of development have turned the area around the sports venue into something far more than a jock hang out – it has become a fine place to dine, to chill out and to party.

Restaurants began showing up on the roads around the stadium in 2000 and there are now well over a dozen eateries, bars and café in the vicinity. The stadium's west gate offers the highest-end dining thanks to two Cantonese and one Hangzhou-style restaurant that stand next to Gongti 100, Beijing's largest bowling venue, and an independent Italian restaurant across the street. The north gate is home to the greatest range of foods, from quick sandwiches and basic Chinese fare to restaurants that specialize in Spanish and Belgian cooking, as well as many bars.

The south gate has been garnering a lot of attention as a hub of new development, but results so far are mixed. The somewhat hidden east gate is home to a few restaurants that draw a mixed crowd of lunch diners. Whatever kind of meal you are after, it is likely that the streets around Workers' Stadium can accommodate.



American-sized steaks and more at Outback Steakhouse

Stadium Area Offers Far More than Footie

The two high-end, Cantonese-style seafood specialists outside the stadium's west gate are **Jinfuchaozhou** and **Nandaoyucun**, both of which offer attractive, if pricey, business buffets. Nandaoyucun is currently running a third anniversary promotion in which all dishes are going for 32 percent off. The restaurant's specialty is dim sum and it offers a wide range of more than 40



Four Seasons Restaurant

reasonably priced varieties, such as the excellent steamed shrimp dumplings (*shuijing xiajiaohuang*, 16.8 yuan) with nearly transparent skins and fresh, tasty shrimp filling.

At dinner, diners get to choose one free seafood dish from a selection of 12, such as shrimp, crab and scallops. One of the restaurant's weaker points is its inexperienced wait staff, who may make their own additions to customers' orders.

Jinfuchaozhou is the new name of the earlier Xiangjiang Baoyuwang restaurant, but the abalone theme has not changed, nor have prices. Diners can expect to shell out 150 yuan per head and up.

Sizhuqin, west gate's Hangzhou-style specialist, is more impressive for décor than food. Diners are serenaded by a traditional Chinese duet during dinner, but may feel less relaxed when they see the expensive menu, with even simple fried rice with ham and vegetables (*yangzhou chaofan*) fetching 22 yuan.

One impressive dish is quick fried ginkgo with salt and prickly ash (*jiaoyan xianbaigu*, 36 yuan), well cooked so that the ginkgo seeds, believed to aid the lungs in Chinese medicine, are all neatly opened to offer access to the flesh inside. Homestyle dishes fetch higher-than-average prices, such as the simple stewed tofu with shredded cucumber (*huanggua laodoufu*) priced at 20 yuan. Moreover, the kitchen is

somewhat inconsistent. Not the best choice in the area.

A little further down from these restaurants is the **YTCJ Café**, which offers a dozen kinds of teas and coffees at exorbitant prices, nearly twice as much as at local Starbucks outlets.

The other side of the street is home of the **Breathe Club**, a new, fancy disco, and the established Italian eatery the **Metro Café** (see *Italian Contender Squares Up* at right).

The area around the south gate is home to a slew of restaurants, generally of the smaller variety. The **Wudai Restaurant**, a Sichuan specialist nestled just off the street, offers exquisite decoration and food that will run most diners around 80 yuan per person. Nearby is the **Cana 33** bar, which has received recent press attention for the few Mexican offerings on its eclectic menu. According to reputable sources, however, the burritos and enchiladas are just as disappointing as those at Beijing's other "Mexican" restaurants.

This stretch also includes several bars and hang-outs, including a huge pool hall, **Deep Bar**, which offers live music and dancing, and **Pipe Café**.



YTCJ Café

Across the street is the time-honored **Likang Kaoya Restaurant**. Walking through the door is like stepping back a decade to the era of state-owned restaurants. The décor is sparse and tacky, the floor kind of dirty and the wait staff indifferent. Food is fine but the duck, priced at 66 yuan per set, is nothing special and of equivalent quality to that at cheaper restaurants.

A better, albeit pricier, duck choice is the fine **Jiuhuashan Roast Duck Restaurant** at the stadium's east gate. Other choices on the stadium's eastern side are newcomer **Four Seasons**, a low-budget specialist in Cantonese cuisine that features a pleasant interior and food that should come in around 40 yuan person, and the higher-end **Capital Garden**

Restaurant, a massive place with a wide ranging menu that draws the lunch crowd.

Capital Garden looks like a villa and is decorated in audacious Western style, but features Chinese food. It has earned a reputation among both the Chinese and foreign business communities, drawn in part by the impressive food variety, ranging from basic dishes to abalone and shark fin. Diners should expect to pay around 100 per person.



Abalone, shark fins, and shrimps of Capital Garden Restaurant

The street north of the stadium's north gate is arguably the most developed, with a range of Western and Eastern fare and two big bars, the **Flair Chivas** and **Vic's**. Inside the gate is **Outback Steakhouse**, the first outlet of the US-based chain to open in the capital. As the name shows, their specialty is big slabs of beef that come well cooked but at premium prices. The Prime Minister's prime rib set fetches 198 yuan and includes nearly 500 grams of meat, a choice of soup or side, salad and bread. Outback also offers a variety of chicken, ribs, seafood and pasta options. "The grilled steak is much better than that of Friday's," account executive and steak lover Hu Ying told *Beijing Today*.



Sizhuqin Restaurant

Lineup:

Outback Steakhouse

Tel: 6506 6268

Where: North gate of Workers' Stadium, Chaoyang

Flair Chivas Bar

Tel: 6500 5888

Where: North gate

Nandaoyucun

Tel: 6581 3888

Where: West gate

Sizhuqin

Tel: 6553 9168

Where: West gate

YTCJ Café

Tel: 6552 1472

Where: West gate

Metro Café

Tel: 6594 0938

Where: across street from west gate

Wudai

Tel: 6500 5318

Where: South gate

Deep

Tel: 6552 7398

Where: South gate

Pipe's Café

Tel: 6593 7756

Where: South gate

Cana 33

Tel: 6553 7862

Where: South gate

Four Seasons

Tel: 6508 5823

Where: East gate

Jiuhuashan

Tel: 6508 5830

Where: East gate

Capital Garden Restaurant

Tel: 6508 5848/5850

Where: East gate



'Boatiful' Life at Stone Boat Café

By Joel Kirkhart

The secret is out – Ritan Park is the unlikely home of one of the most interesting, grooviest bars to appear in Beijing in a long time. The cozy Stone Boat Café occupies an actual stone boat (smaller than Cixi's favorite) attached to a little pond in a picturesque corner of the park.

A sense of history pervades the place from the beautifully restored paintings and carvings on the roof beams and windows. A lucky few can make it up the steep stairs to the loft area, as cozy a nook as one could hope to find. At the same time, Stone Boat gives a nod to the IT era with outlets sunk in the floor for powering notebook computers and wireless Internet access in the works.

That kind of mix of old and new was part of owner Alec Shen's careful plans for the place. "I wanted guests to recall the old Chinese lifestyle, particularly in the attention and connection to nature. From the environment and the building, I wanted it to be totally different from modern life, but still somehow connected," he explained.

The drinks menu is short and to the point, with beers going for a low 10 to 20 yuan each and cocktails priced at 20 yuan for basics to 30 for a sizeable Long Island iced tea. There is also a selection of real teas and lots of freshly brewed coffees, from cappuccino (18-26 yuan) to refillable brewed coffee at breakfast that costs just 5 yuan. The bottomless mug is part of the Stone Boat's great breakfast deal, 30 yuan for eggs, sausage or bacon, toast or French toast and yogurt or juice.

From the bar's tiny kitchen, chef Wang Jun also cooks up satisfying, competitively priced lunches and dinners, ranging from serious dishes like baked salmon pie with red wine pears (68 yuan) and the bargain pan-fried beef tenderloin with black pepper sauce and mushroom (38 yuan) to fresh salads, simpler fried rice and noodle options and snacks.

Stone Boat has a nearly unparalleled relaxing vibe and is a superb place to spend an afternoon, evening or whole day in any weather. It can be hard to find in the dark and getting out of the park can require fence hopping if the guards fall asleep, but it is more than worth it. You have been informed.

Where: Inside west gate of Ritan Park **Open:** 7:30 am – 2 am



Beef noodles, 18 yuan

Photos by Lou Ge / Joel Kirkhart

Italian Contender Squares Up

By Tom Spearman

I know you should judge each restaurant on its own merits, but when I went to Metro Café, I couldn't help thinking of Giza, the first Italian restaurant I had been to in Beijing without being disappointed. Everything had been great there, but I hadn't been to Metro before and I had read online that it was the best Italian restaurant in Beijing.

One of the selling points is that Metro make their own pasta and sure enough there's an enormous choice. Fortunately, the wait staff kept their distance while I sifted through the 2,000 options. You choose from about a dozen different kinds of homemade pasta and from a page and half of sauces to go with it. I'd heard that Metro was pretty expensive but if you're prepared to stick to pasta it's very reasonable. My wife Laura flicked past the pasta pages and headed straight for the most expensive thing on the menu – king prawns, coming in at 148 yuan, to follow a starter of pumpkin soup (35 yuan). I selected spinach ravioli with creamy parmesan alfredo sauce to start (60 yuan), followed by fettucine puttanesca (70 yuan).

The glass of chianti I ordered tasted as though an Italian peasant's sock had somehow made its way into the bottle. So I downed that fast and ordered a glass of Penfold's shiraz cabernet (bin 35), an enormous improvement for only an extra 5 yuan.

Laura's pumpkin soup was "good if you like sweet soup". Very home-made, with a nice smooth texture, I thought. Her king prawn duly ruled. "Everything is good here," she said. The prawn and the vegetables were delicious with a strongly-flavored anchovy, garlic and ginger-based sauce. My spinach ravioli was so good that the alfredo sauce seemed a bit boring in comparison. Another sauce option might be better but that ravioli was tremendous. The fettucine puttanesca was good, but this time the sauce was the best thing about it, with a wonderfully pungent aroma of anchovy.

For desert, Laura wolfed down a New York cheesecake, which I thought was pretty ordinary. The espresso I ordered was probably the best I've had in China. I'd go back to Metro just for the coffee. But the rest of it was pretty good too.

Where: 9 Gongti Xilu, across street from west gate of Workers' Stadium, Chaoyang **Open:** 11:30 am – 2 pm, 5:30-10 pm, weekends 11:30 pm – 10 pm **Tel:** 6594 0938 **Average cost:** 100 yuan per person

Movies

The Guasha Treatment

Directed by Zheng Xiaolong. Starring Zhu Xu, Liang Jiahui and Jiang Wenli. Based on the story of a middle-class family that emigrates from China to the US. The grandfather treats his grandson with 'gua-sha,' which causes marks on the body, when the son becomes ill. The American hospital staff then accuse the parents of abusing the child and take him away. In English.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu **When:** November 28-29, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 40 yuan **Tel:** 13901134745

The Italian Job

Directed by F. Gary Gray. Starring Mark Wahlberg, Seth Green and Ed Norton. A bunch of high-rolling, professional crooks steal gold bullion from a palazzo in Venice and end up getting double-crossed by one of their own. They then plan a bigger heist to exact their revenge on the traitor. In English.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian **When:** from November 28 **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6261 2851

Star Runner (Shaonian Ahi)

A South Korean teacher comes to Hong Kong to teach at a boxing academy where she meets a student named Ahi and a forbidden love blossoms. In Korean with Chinese subtitles.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian **When:** from November 28 **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6261 2851

Activities

The art of tea

Tea Master Zhang Dawei will teach you the basics of the Chinese tea ceremony. Participants can practice performing and serving tea. Everyone will receive a handout in English so you can practice the Dao of Tea on your own. English translation provided.

Where: Cha Jia Fu Teahouse, southwest bank of Houhai Lake **When:** November 29, 2:30-4:30 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan (includes tea) **Tel:** 13501035145

Language Exchange

A young Chinese college girl is looking for a native English speaker for language exchange. **Tel:** 6573 6649

English major student wants to make friends with native English speakers. **Email:** suchseason@sohu.com

Music

Bring on the Brahms

China Philharmonic Orchestra performs Johannes Brahms's Tragic Overture, and Mozart's 13th Serenade in G Major.

Where: Poly Theatre **When:** November 28, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50-380 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126

Midnight bash

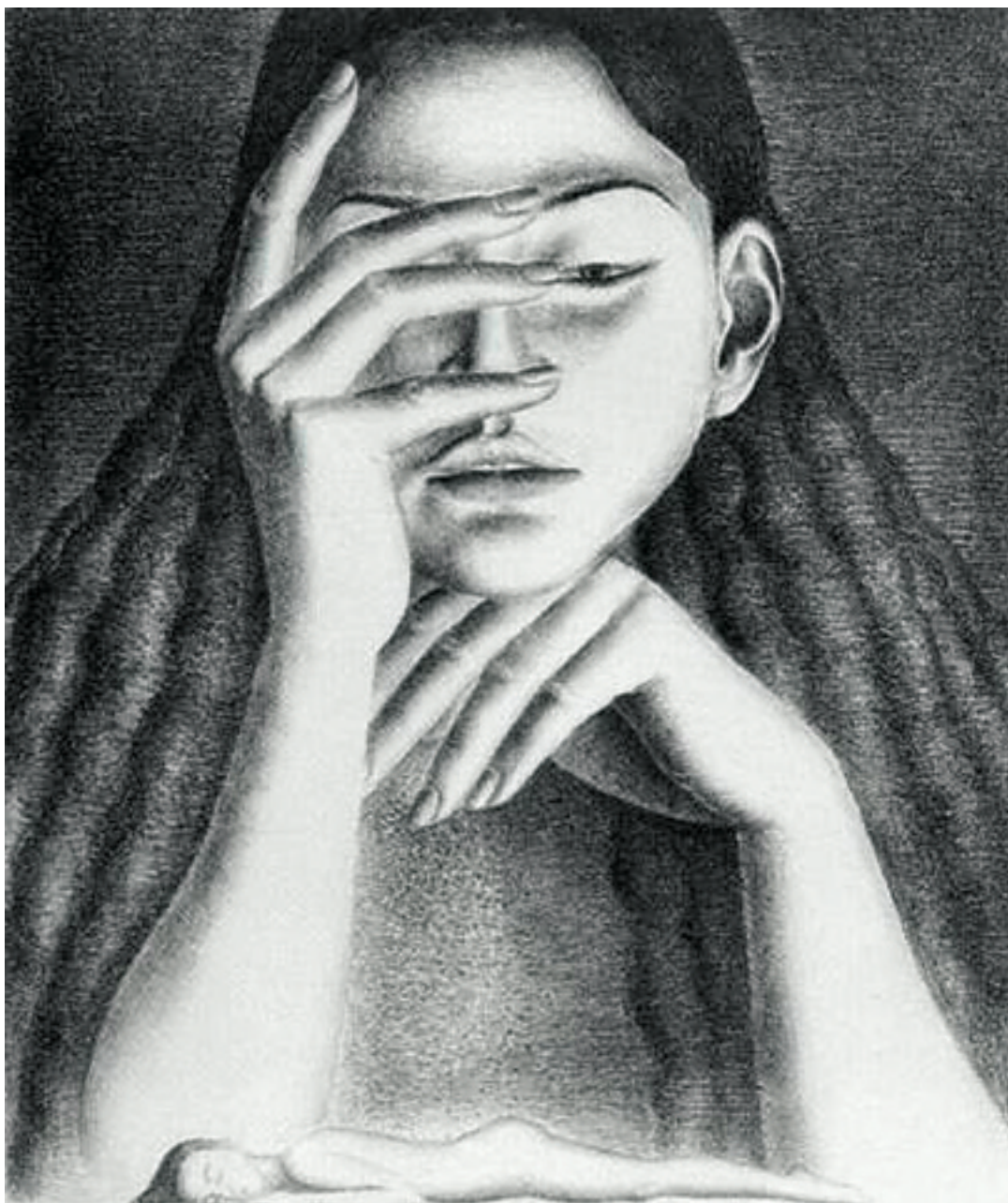
Performed by Brazil State Song and Dance Troupe.

Where: Beizhan Theater **When:** December 5, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-580 yuan **Tel:** 6835 1383

Joel N. Juan Qui Vega premier concert in Beijing

Joel N. Juan Qui Vega is a Mexican pianist of Chinese ancestry. His repertoire extends from classical music to Mexican and Chinese music.

Where: Concert Hall of China National Library, Zhongguancun Nandajie **When:** November 29, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-200 yuan **Tel:** 8488 7066



Exhibitions

Collection exhibition

This exhibition features famous works such as Horse by Yang Gang, the Courtyard by Fan Xiang and landscape by Li Xiaoke.

Where: Creation Art Gallery, north end of Ritan Donglu **When:** till December 24, 10 am – 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570



Morning Breeze by Fan Xiang

Christmas Arts Fair

The exhibition features limited edition prints, oil paintings and porcelain by Xiao Mi, Wei Ye, Zhang Ge, Yi Ling, Lin Chunyan.

Where: Yan Club, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu **When:** November 29 – December 19, 10 am – 8 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8457 3506

Raw moves

Solo exhibition of renowned Australian photographer James Houston sponsored by the Australian Embassy.

Where: Jintai Art Museum, 1 Nongzhannanlu **When:** November 28 – December 8, 10 am – 4 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6501 4984

Ninety-nine

Beijing Tokyo Art Projects is inviting artists to bring their paintings, drawings and photos by November 29 and 99 will be selected for exhibition. All pieces are limited to 40 cm by 40 cm in size.

Where: Beijing Tokyo Art Projects, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Dashanzi **When:** November 29 – December 31, 10 am – 6:30 pm (except Monday) **Tel:** 8457 3245

Lecture

Chinese folk music and instruments

Renowned young Chinese musician Shan Pengfei, (age 14) will play the Suona, a Chinese trumpet-like instrument. Shan Wentong, who comes from a long line of suona and guanzi musicians from Henan Province and is a member of China's National Folk Music Orchestra, will explain the instruments and all the interesting stories behind them. English narration provided.

Where: Lee's Carpet House. **When:** November 30, 1:30-4:30 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan for adults, 30 yuan for students **Tel:** 8462 2081

Sports

The tomb raiders

An easy four hour walk that starts from a huge quarry and passes some Ming Tombs in Changping County north of Beijing.

Where: Meet at the Lido outside of Starbucks **When:** November 30, 8:30 am **Email:** Huilin@bjhikers.com **Tel:** 139 1002 5516

Services

Seeking job

Yuan Dingman, a 32-year-old translator, would like to work as a private tutor or travel guide for foreign friends. **Tel:** 8697 9782

Seeking team members

An international group of cyclists will take an overland route from Beijing, China to Venice, Italy. The trip will follow the same route that Marco Polo took, but instead of four years, the cyclists aim to cover it in about four months. Currently the group has three confirmed team members, one American and two Chinese. They hope to have six-to-eight people in the group. Anyone interested in this adventure is welcome to join.

Contact: Tony Chen **Email:** tony_cg@sina.com **Tel:** 13601094588

Stage

Irish Coffee (Ai'erlan Kafei)

Adapted from the novel by popular Internet writer Pizi Cai, this drama tells the story of a love affair between a man and a café owner.

Where: People's Art Theatre, 22 Wangfujing Dajie **When:** till December 12, 7:15 pm **Admission:** 100 yuan **Tel:** 6525 0996

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By Guo Yuandan

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Yuanmingyuan(圆明园)

The 350-hectare Yuanmingyuan, or Garden of Gardens, was a royal park built during the reign of emperors Kangxi and Yongzhen of the Qing Dynasty, in the first two decades of the 18th century and was used as the office of the emperors during summer.

The park combined the delicacy of the tiny gardens of Southern China, the wilderness of the forests from the north, and European style architecture. It was destroyed in 1860 by the Anglo-French Allied Forces, who entered Beijing in the second Opium War.

Yuanmingyuan has become a hot topic these days, with many people appealing for its reconstruction. However the government has ruled that only some of the relics in the park will be restored, while a park will be established, based on the ruins.

Dong Ba (东坝)

Dong Ba was once a small village to the northeast of Beijing. With the rapid expansion of the city, the village has become one of the ten residential districts surrounding the city, along with Tiantongyuan, Huilongguan, Shijingshan, Xihongmen and others.

Bordering the third diplomatic area in the west and facing the new central business district in the south, Dong Ba is described as the "backyard" of the two districts, and is considered to have huge potential in real estate development.

Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-shing's real estate developing arm, Hutchison Whampoa, expressed interest in the district in September 2001, but later abandoned the idea. Land prices and its geomantic location were said to be the two major factors behind the decision.

Taking the Fifth

Beijing has its second, third, fourth ring roads, the first, however, seems to be missing. In fact, the narrow pathway around the Forbidden City is generally acknowledged to be the "First Ring Road." The Second Ring Road was built in the 1970s, the third in the 1980s, and the fourth ring road in the 1990s.

On November 1, Beijing marked the completion of the Fifth Ring Road, and it was put into operation the same day.

With an investment of 13.64 billion yuan and three years in the building, the 98-kilometer-long Fifth Ring Road links several tourist attractions as well as some of the city's newest residential districts.

Major sites include Yuanmingyuan (圆明园) in the north west, Wanping (宛平城) and Lugou Qiao (卢沟桥), or Marco Polo Bridge in the south west, Yintluchi (饮鹿池) in the south, Yizhuang (亦庄) in the southeast, and Dongba (东坝) in the east.

Encircling the capital at an average distance of 10 to 15 kilometers from downtown, the Fifth Ring Road also links the Airport Expressway (机场高速), the Beijing-Tongxian Expressway (京通快速路), the Beijing-Tianjin-Tanggu Expressway (京津塘高速), the Beijing-Kaifeng Expressway (京开高速), the Beijing-Shijiazhuang Expressway (京石高速), the Beijing-Shenyang Expressway (京沈高速), the Beijing-Badaling Expressway (八达岭高速), and the Beijing-Chengde Expressway (京承高速).

Unlike the other ringroads, there is a 0.5 yuan per kilometer toll for driving on the Fifth Ring Road. Debate is still continuing in the city council on whether or not a fee should be charged, as the road is funded from the government budget that comes from taxpayers' pockets. The counter argument is that as the road was built using public debt, it is a business where the government has to pay the bond purchasers with interest, so a toll should be charged to users to cover this.

Beijing's newest ring road has 32 entrances and exists ().

Wanping (宛平城)

The small walled town beside the Yongding River, once an important water source for Beijing, is famous as the starting point of the first anti-Japanese war, on July 7, 1937, at Lugou Qiao (Marco Polo Bridge) just to the west.

Wanping first became a military stronghold nearly 1,000 years ago in the Liao Dynasty. The tiny town, covering just 0.2 square kilometers, was designed as a defense against the Manchurians from the northeast. In the final years of Ming Dynasty it developed into a small town.

Today, the town has become a tourist site commemorating the past, with arts, crafts and small articles for sale in the tens of shops along its only street. The largest building in the town is the Anti-Japanese Memorial Hall, which holds a great number of records and articles from the eight war years in the 1930s and 1940s.

The ten-century-old Lugou Bridge is famous for the 999 carved stone lions along its two sides. In the 1930s, Japanese troops crossed this bridge on their march into Beijing.

Yin Lu Chi (饮鹿池)

Yin Lu Chi (饮鹿池) refers to the pond where Milu, or David's deer drink. Today, it is in Miluyuan (麋鹿苑), a garden specially built for the animal that originated in China, disappeared for a century and was reintroduced from Europe in 1985.

Miluyuan is part of the ancient royal hunting garden, but only three percent of the original 210 square kilometers remain, in the south of Beijing. The royal hunting garden, once called Nanhazi, was first established in the Yuan Dynasty, and was maintained by the following Ming Dynasty as a royal hunting garden and a military school for the royal youngsters. When the Manchurian Qing Dynasty supplanted the Ming, they renamed the garden Nanyuan, and enclosed it with a long wall.

In 1900, when the Eight-Power Allied Forces entered Beijing to put down the Boxer Rebellion, they destroyed the garden, burnt the temples, killed the animals and drove off the guarding soldiers. David's deer was one of the most common animals in the garden.

Pere (Father) David, a French missionary, purchased a number of David's deer in 1865 and sent them back to France, where they bred and prospered.

In 1985, as a result of efforts by the World Wildlife Foundation, the British government sent 22 of the deer back to their original habitat, the Beijing Miluyuan. Since then, China has established four natural parks for the deer in Beijing, Jiangsu, Hubei and Henan, and the number in China has increased to 2,000.

Yi Zhuang (亦庄)

Yi Zhuang was also just a small village ten years ago, in the southeast of Beijing. Following the establishment there of the seven-square-kilometer Beijing Economic Technological Development Area, the tiny land area has become an important high-tech industrial zone and a high-grade residential satellite community for white-collar workers from both the industrial area and downtown area.



Wanping Qiao



Jinghai Qiao



Wufang Qiao



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